

CRIME: THE STING TO TRAP KIESHA'S KILLERS

Reader's digest

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Letters

READERS' COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

Food Confidential

While we may spend a relatively small portion of our disposable income on food “35 Secrets Food Manufacturers Won’t Tell You” (September), we pay dearly in other ways. I would not mind paying a little more at the supermarket in exchange for government policies that ensured healthier people, ecosystems and communities.

JANICE DYER

When I was growing up, we had food growers and food preparers;



nowhere do I recall food manufacturers. We'd all be healthier if more food was purchased directly from growers and made at home. **RICHARD POTENSKI**

Oh, My Aching Back

As someone who once suffered from back pain I read “Oh, My Back!” (July) with interest. After graduating from university I discontinued all sports and paid for it with slipped discs and excruciating pain. For years I was treated with cortisone injections until my doctor recommended physiotherapy. By rebuilding back and abdominopelvic muscles, not only did I get rid of the pain, but also a potbelly. Today I do yoga and Pilates and am as fit as a fiddle!

MANFRED S.

Insightful Suggestions

In “The Best Advice I Ever Got” (June, award-winning composer Paul Williams was told: “No matter how the world is treating you, if you are caring, loving, and kind in the way you treat the world, your journey will be easier.” This article was a mini

LET US KNOW

If you are moved – or provoked – by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. Turn to page 6 for how to join the discussion.

compendium of essential insights which, if heeded, will pay dividends.

ANDREW KERR

More on Reincarnation

Remembering one's past life as described in "The Children Who Have Lived Before" (May) is so starkly opposed to our everyday experience that we do not believe it. But scientists, too, accept things that are just as bizarre and counter-intuitive.

MANOJIT BHOWMIK

Outflanked

I loved Nury Vittachi's piece on "Cuss Words for the Classy" (August). My children and I are using "You are a hair growing on my flank area" as the benchmark and are having a lot of fun outdoing each other with creative insults! As always another great read.

A. SIMEONI, *Rose Bay, NSW*

WIN!



CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win cash. To enter, see details on page 6.

PHOTOS: THINKSTOCK



Muscle Tussle

We asked you to think up a funny caption for this photo.

Before/During/After. **PIERS AGMEN**

Caught these two eyeing up my jelly bean jar. **DALE BOWERS**

Only as strong as the weakest link. **ISABEL WHITTY, Narooma, NSW**

The meat in the sandwich. **ROGER FOWLER**

A big brain goes arm and arm with big body muscles! **MARVIN SAGER**

"Come on, mates, kiss and make up." **T. THOMAS, Limestone Coast, SA**

He ain't heavy, he's my brother! **DAMON BREE**

Size doesn't matter. Every man has the right to bare arms. **LAURENCE OLIVER**

We're triplets - but guess who hated spinach? **LEN SEMBER**

Twiggy in the middle. **NICOLA BEDFORD**
If you can't beat them, join them. **CAROLYN CHEN**

Now PULL! **GRAHAM LONGHURST**

Congratulations to this month's winner, Len Sember.

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FOR DIGITAL EXTRAS AND
SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS, SEE PAGE 25.

Anecdotes and jokes

Send in your real-life laugh for
Life's Like That or All in a Day's
Work. Got a joke? Send it in for
Laughter is the Best Medicine!

Smart Animals

Share antics of unique pets or
wildlife in up to 300 words.

Kindness of Strangers

Share your moments of
generosity in 100–500 words.

My Story

Do you have an inspiring or
life-changing tale to tell?
Submissions must be true,
unpublished, original and
800–1000 words – see website
for more information.

Letters to the editor, caption competition and other reader submissions

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Editor's Note

With Extra Additives

HANDS UP, EVERYONE WHO SEES A PRODUCT LABEL at the supermarket that says “No added chemicals” and thinks that’s a good thing. You’ll be in fine company. It’s a very successful marketing boast and a phrase that packs in so much more than “Just as it comes”.

But think about it for a moment. Saying a product is without something is a good idea only if we believe that particular something is to be avoided at all costs.

So at what point did the bad press kick in for chemicals? After all, at a scientific level, all known matter in the universe – from the purest spray from a spring-fed waterfall, to the sludge at the bottom of a waste dump – is by definition chemical. Too often, though, calling something chemical is akin to saying it’s nasty, artificial, health-damaging, potentially toxic and Bad For You. Evil.

Take a look at one of my favourite stories in this issue, “Chemical Reaction” by Mark Lorch (page 60). It’s a timely plea to reinstate chemistry as the glorious molecular magic and the high drama it really is. Elemental!

Enjoy the issue.



Choice Reading

These are some of the stories in this issue that most inspired, amused or provoked us here at RD

A male satin bowerbird that used to live in our garden decorated his “bower” with blue feathers, insect shells, and shiny human artefacts like glass, plastic and foil paper. Reading the fascinating “Grand Designs” (page 82) about animal architecture got me thinking about how humans bring nature’s elements into our own homes. We fill our habitats with shells and stones we have gathered, and display pine cones or old bird’s nests on rustic twig tables. The nesting instinct, it seems, is strong.

The Vogelkop bowerbird of New Guinea (page 82) creates magnificent displays



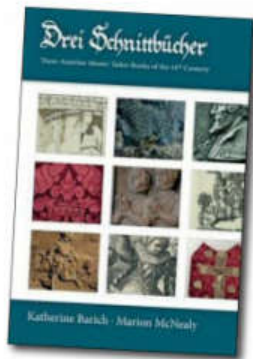
MELANIE EGAN, deputy chief subeditor

It usually hits me as I drive to the office of a morning. The topics of discussion on the radio are always about one pending doom or another – financial, environmental, health ... You could be forgiven for thinking pessimists have taken over. It’s rare to hear anything positive about being part of this great big kaleidoscope of

magic we call Planet Earth. Can it really be that bad? It was a welcome relief to read “The World is Not Falling Apart”(page 32) and its thorough explanation of how the 24/7 news cycle has come to distort reality. I’m glad that, despite the hype, there’s still plenty to celebrate and reason to feel hope. **LOUISE WATERSON**, managing editor

I've long believed in good alternatives to banks, and so the rise of crowdfunding ("With a Little Cash from My Friends", page 74) fills me with joy. My most recent venture in the field is a book on 16th century Austrian textiles that arrived just as we were going to print. It's many months later than the original proposal, but about a third longer than I was promised, so I feel my gamble has paid off!

DONYALE HARRISON, chief subeditor and production editor



As someone who loves travel and food with equal passion, a stand-out for me was the tale about Portugal ("Life and Love in Alentejo", page 94). It brought back vivid memories of my last trip to this vibrant country – days and nights spent exploring the terrain and restaurants. The writer weaves an enchanting tale – indulging in dogfish soup, duck rice and veal – all swished down with Portuguese vino and the most important ingredient of all, a wonderful old friend.

KATHY BUCHANAN, contributing editor

My ten-year-old daughter loathes breakfast. So much so that persuading her to "Just eat something" usually sees us start the day on very unfriendly terms. The same daughter loves Audrey Hepburn. So much so that she was

Do you have a favourite story in this issue? Write to us: details on page 6.

willing to take the "madeleine challenge". We made the choc chip variety and she devoured them. Smugly, she added that if I continue to offer her "cakes" every morning instead of cereal, yoghurt or toast, she would never resist. If it was good enough for Audrey, it's good enough for us! ("Breakfast at Audrey's", page 48).

VICKI POLZOT, editorial coordinator

Where was Mark Lorch ("Chemical Reaction", page 60) when I was in school? I paid little attention to my chemistry teachers because along with the "danger" involved, the labs did not smell so great and the content was presented in an extremely dull manner. Had I a teacher who captured my imagination things could have been so different.

ELLEN WESSELING, executive assistant to the managing director

Mental hospitals in the 1960s were hard places. Irene never said a word but her sparkling eyes spoke volumes

Beyond Silence

BY JAN WELLS

Jan Wells is retired and still lives in Newcastle with her husband. She is an active member of the Cameron Park Probus Club, plays croquet and loves to collect interesting items from yesteryear.

I FIRST MET IRENE IN 1964 when, at the age of 17, I started as a trainee psychiatric nurse at Stockton Mental Hospital, near Newcastle in New South Wales. For five years, I worked on a ward that housed about 100 patients. Some of the patients could be very aggressive and so they were often restrained in straitjackets. Irene was in her mid-20s and was in the group needing to wear a straitjacket – although I never witnessed her being physically violent.

As I gained experience and came to understand my patients' needs, my job became easier. Irene was a character. She never spoke a word but her beautiful brown eyes would sparkle. It didn't matter how well I laced her into the straitjacket, within ten minutes she would hand it back to me. Each time, I'd tell her that only Houdini could escape the straitjacket. However, no sooner was she left alone than Irene would be standing back next to me, jacket in hand. This became a game and each time she would twinkle with mischief, knowing she had outsmarted me and the system. Although she never uttered a word and never smiled, her eyes told me she understood everything I said. I respected her because Irene seemed to



PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

possess an inner resolve that never accepted defeat.

In the late 1960s, the treatment of mental health patients changed dramatically, and we were told that our patients were no longer to be restrained in straitjackets. Within a few days of us issuing sets of new clothing to the patients on our ward, I noticed that Irene seemed unwell and dejected. The patients had each been given shoes and socks and I thought Irene would prefer this to the restraint but she just sat

in the corner looking sad. The doctor checked Irene and ordered blood tests which all came back clear.

I soon realised what the problem could be: Irene no longer had a challenge. I decided to test my theory. As I dressed her, I made a big deal about telling her how good she looked and that she must keep her shoes and socks on to keep her feet warm. Sure enough, she returned in a couple of minutes and handed the shoes and socks back to me. This time I helped her with her shoes and knotted the laces but that didn't deter her either. The sparkle in her eyes was back! This game continued and I didn't mind as Irene was again happy. I did try giving her puzzles and books and pencils but she wasn't interested.

After many years nursing, I married and resigned from my position to raise our family. Then in 1992, I

returned for a large staff reunion at the hospital and we were invited to visit the ward we had worked on. So much had changed. The wards were now called units and the patients were now called residents. The residents enjoyed listening to music and watching television. The atmosphere was much more relaxed.

While I was talking with the staff, I looked over and saw Irene, now in her early 50s, sitting and watching television. She wore a pretty dress and neat shoes and socks. I walked over, took her hand and spoke a few words to her but she didn't seem to recognise me. I returned to the group but not long after, I felt a pat on my arm. It was Irene. And, yes, you've guessed it: she handed me her newly stripped off shoes and socks. I had to laugh.

I sat her down. Together we put her shoes and socks back on. I gave her a hug and as I looked at her not only

were those beautiful brown eyes still sparkling, but this time she also gave me the most beautiful smile.

I kissed her and walked back to the group and told the staff about our journey from a straitjacket to shoes and socks. They were amazed at how far Irene had come because now she helped in the dining room by setting and clearing the tables at meal times and she was immaculately dressed at all times.

I like to think Irene's beautiful smile was telling me she was happy and content. Through it all, she had always demonstrated a spirit that would not be harnessed.

Late last year Irene passed away at the age of 75. It was a privilege to know and work with you, Irene.

**Do you have a tale to tell?
We'll pay cash for any original and
unpublished story we print. See page
6 for details on how to contribute.**

* * *

YOU CAN CHOOSE YOUR FRIENDS...

*Sometimes relatives can do the oddest things – as recounted by
Tweeters posting on the topic of #myweirdrelative.*

My uncle got banned from a Chinese buffet for staying four hours
and then trying to take home 50 crab legs in his pocket.

@Wolfxx

My grandma stood on her head while someone wrapped her in
duct tape to appear thinner at her divorce court hearing.

@JuliaLamberth

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Our incredibly successful 100-word story competition is back. This is your chance to win US\$1000 and see your work published by Reader's Digest – all you have to do is write a brilliant work of fiction in just 100 words. Stories should be original, unpublished and exactly 100 words long (99-words will be disqualified, hyphenated words count as one). Submit your entries by December 31, 2015.

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It's not easy being a single mother with few resources, so a friendly gesture shines a ray of warmth ...

Through the Pouring Rain

BY ADELINE JEAN

Adeline Jean, 42, lives in Queensland, Australia. She enjoys bushwalking, country drives, British murder mysteries and has recently started dabbling in gardening.

THE TORRENTIAL RAIN was sudden and furious on a cold night over ten years ago. My bus was not going all the way along its normal route this evening and had stopped at the depot because of flash flooding. With 2km still to go, I was running out of time to pick up my then four-year-old daughter from her childcare centre. I waded through knee-high water in the pouring rain into the shopping mall to buy a cheap plastic poncho for my daughter. Then I took off my jacket and put it in my bag to keep dry, hitched up my skirt, took off my shoes, and ran. I arrived at the day care soaking wet but I was glad to be only a few minutes late. Now I could face the next problem.

I had no way of getting home. It was around 6pm and there were no buses and I couldn't afford a taxi. Home was too far to walk in the rain with a young child and it was quickly getting dark. We stood outside the childcare centre staring at the rain pelting down, with it showing no sign of abating. Caught up in my swirling thoughts, I just barely noticed another parent pull up and race inside to collect his child ten minutes later. I did not recognise him and my thoughts turned back to my current situation.

Having recently gone through an unpleasant split, I was a single mother with no family in Australia and no close friends



I could call. I had to do something; we could not stand on the steps all night. I was getting cold and I knew that I had to get us somewhere with some protection. Then I remembered that with a quick dash across the road we could be at the convenience store. Although it was closed by this time, there were dry, empty cardboard boxes by the door. I figured that we could cover ourselves with the boxes (plus I had the plastic poncho for my daughter) and wait there until the rain ceased. My only concern was whether this would be all night.

I pulled the plastic poncho over my daughter's head, grabbed her hand, tucked my head down and was about to run, when a voice asked, "How far are you going?"

I whirled around to face the man

who'd arrived late to fetch his child. I could hardly believe that here was a chance of a lift and I stumbled over my words telling him where I lived. He then casually offered to take us, saying "I'm going that way." I was completely soaked and didn't know how I'd avoid getting the car seat wet. As if he could not see for himself, I nervously informed him that I was very wet. But he didn't seem to mind, and was simply happy to do us a favour.

To this day, I am still grateful, and I get goose bumps when I think about the evening that my daughter and I were stranded but for the kindness of this stranger.

Share your story about a small act of kindness that made a huge impact. Turn to page 6 for details on how to contribute and earn cash.

Unbelievable

TRUE TALES TOLD TALL



Man vs Wild

Nury Vittachi on the importance of being able to tell animals apart

THE WOMEN IN MY LIFE are quite likely the most powerful humans who have ever lived but they will still scream if they see an ant. Luckily, I am The Man Without Fear in this regard, and can remove the offending ant **WITH MY BARE HANDS**.

I'm not saying men are any better. At a garden party, I saw a sticky,

smelly toddler run to the adults holding a large spider. The women ran shrieking from the spider and the men ran shrieking from the sticky, smelly toddler.

Small kids aren't scared of bugs. In fact, their total all-round fearlessness is a major cause of parental stress. My kids used to fall out

ILLUSTRATION: ANDREW JOYNER

of trees all the time until I told them that if they died in real life, they would ALSO die in Runescape, their favourite computer game. After that they sat quietly on the bench with the mums.

We modern people are cut off from nature by technology. I was on the morning commuter train the other day and some guy LOOKED UP FROM HIS PHONE. It

was actually quite scary. I mean, who does that sort of thing these days?

At the office, I found I'd been sent several news cuttings that showed that unfamiliarity with nature is a problem. A man in Yunnan, China, raised two "dogs" for several years without realising that he was actually

sharing his home with a pair of Asian black bears. The article didn't say how the owner was finally clued in, but I'm guessing he probably found them sitting upright eating honey-coated picnickers. The man gave his non-dogs to some sort of animal rescue centre – they'll probably cause a sensation as the only bears in the world that wag their tails, lick your face and fetch sticks.

At a safari park in China recently, a group of tourists in a small bus (or "packed lunch container" as the animals probably think of them) found the exit gate jammed. This gave the visitors a fascinating 45 extra

minutes to take close-up pictures of large beasts licking their lips, fetching cutlery and unfolding napkins.

In the UK, a snake catcher was summoned by a man who said there was a dangerous looking snake curled up asleep inside his computer's box part. The thing had red and black markings, which suggested that it was

poisonous. The snake catcher raced to the house, where he opened the computer to find it contained a red and black electric cable. It was dangerous, but unlikely to slither around the house biting people. Unless it was an Apple computer, then someone's probably made an app that gives it

this function.

Talking of weird animals, we saw many when I took the family to Australia for a holiday recently. I told my kids that God made kangaroos and duck-billed platypuses to win a bet but then couldn't find them so had to leave them down here. Which leads to this vital lesson: it's NEVER TOO EARLY to teach your children science.

I have to go now. I've just remembered that the dog we adopted from a rescue centre likes honey, so I need to get home and count the kids.

Nury Vittachi is a Hong Kong-based author. Read his blog at Mrjam.org

***A man from
China raised
two "dogs"
without
realising they
were Asian
black bears***

THE DIGEST

FOOD

Pepping Up Vegetables

Make your daily diet more delicious easily

Vegetables are often an afterthought in our meals. But with so many vital nutrients, they are far too important to be sidelined. If you are in a hurry, grab some frozen or pre-cut varieties. And if you think they're boring, try pepping them up in one of the following ways:

■ Squeeze a little lemon juice over spinach, kale or zucchini to enhance the flavour.

■ Dress steamed broccoli or cauliflower with a little toasted sesame oil, soy sauce and sesame seeds, or with lemon juice, olive oil

and roasted pine nuts or pumpkin seeds.

■ Drizzle steamed Asian greens with oyster sauce and scatter with finely chopped garlic.

■ Cut root vegetables, potatoes and pumpkin into chunks and roast drizzled with oil, rosemary and garlic.

■ Chargrill slices of zucchini and capsicum, and whole corn cobs, then season with pepper and olive oil.

■ Stir-fry quartered Brussels sprouts with pine nuts.



ROAST VEGETABLES IN SALADS

Drizzle your choice of oil over chunks of orange sweet potato, pumpkin, even carrots and red capsicum then roast until cooked through. Add to a bowl of mixed salad leaves and toss through a little balsamic or white wine vinegar. *Yum!*

PHOTOS: THINKSTOCK

Which Oil is Best?

If your pantry is home to just one type of cooking oil, you're missing out. As well as their unique tastes, different oils have different properties. Here's a rundown of cooking techniques and which widely available oils suits each best:

FOR SEARING, BROWNING, AND DEEP-FRYING

■ Almond oil is a member of the healthy monounsaturated fat group, along with olive and macadamia nut oil. It has a high smoke point (450°C) so it can be used for all kinds of cooking and will add that all-important extra nutty flavour. Store in a cool dry place.

■ Sunflower oil is a mild-tasting oil well suited to high-temperature cooking and most commonly used in frying food. It is also a good substitute for butter in cakes for people with a dairy intolerance. Store in a cool, dry place, and discard 12 months after opening.

FOR BAKING AND STIR-FRYING

■ Macadamia nut oil gives any dish a rich buttery flavour and is full of antioxidants and

monounsaturated fats. It can tolerate up to 230°C and will last up to three years if stored in a dry, cool place.

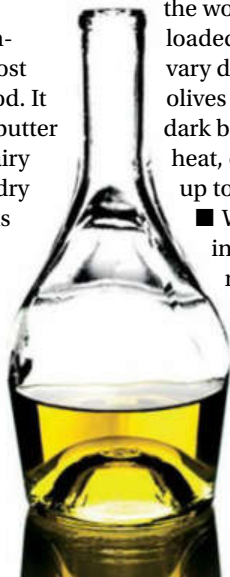
FOR LIGHT SAUTÉING, SAUCES, AND LOW-HEAT BAKING

■ Sesame oil is often described as the queen of oils and is widely used as a cooking oil in India and a flavour enhancer in Chinese and Southeast Asian cuisine. Unlike some cooking oils, sesame oil is delicate and will spoil after only a few months. Always store in the refrigerator.

FOR COLD SALAD DRESSINGS, DIPS AND MARINADES

■ Extra virgin olive oil is one of the world's healthiest foods and loaded with flavour, which will vary depending on where the olives were grown. If stored in a dark bottle away from light and heat, extra virgin olive oil can last up to 12 months.

■ Walnut oil is available in both cold-pressed and roasted varieties and best used cold. Add it to salads or over cooked dishes, fish and vegetables just before serving. Walnut oil spoils quickly, usually 3-4 months after opening.



Surprising Reasons Your Belly's Bloated

Ever feel stuffed to the gills after a normal meal? Wake up feeling fine but have a belly that makes you look about six months pregnant by lunch? Welcome to the world of bloating. This common symptom can be triggered by certain foods, but it also can be the result of other, more surprising factors.

STOMACH BUG About 25% of patients who get gastroenteritis, a stomach infection, have bloating



even after the illness clears.

A likely suspect: small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO). In SIBO patients, abnormal levels of microbes colonise the small intestine, which can lead to gas and bloating, says Dr Henry Lin, chief of gastroenterology at the New Mexico VA Health Care System. Gastroenteritis can disrupt your defence mechanisms that normally keep bacteria out of the small intestine, leading to SIBO.

TEST YOUR MEDICAL IQ

What is paraesthesia?

- A.** Radiation disease.
- B.** A tingling or prickling sensation.
- C.** Fear of enclosed spaces.
- D.** An allergy drug.

Answer: B. The feeling most of us

know as pins and needles is harmless if it is temporary. But if the paraesthesia hurts, doesn't go away or is linked to loss of sensation, get checked out – it can be symptomatic of everything from carpal tunnel sensation to heavy-metal toxicity.

It is typically diagnosed with a breath test and can be treated with antibiotics or other approaches.

WATERMELON SNACK Sweet, refreshing, thirst-quenching – and bloating. Watermelon – like apples, pears and mangoes – has a high ratio of fructose to glucose (both sugars occur naturally in fruit). This can cause gas and bloating in the estimated one in three people who has difficulty digesting fructose. If this sounds like you, switch to fruit with a more balanced fructose-to-glucose ratio, such as bananas and blueberries.

SKIPPING EXERCISE The last thing you may want to do on a “fat day” is squeeze into workout clothes. But physical activity stimulates the muscles of your digestive tract, and helps move the food and air bubbles that make you feel bloated through your GI tract. In one small German study, people who took a post-dinner stroll significantly sped up the time it took their body to digest their meal.

HOLIDAYS Almost 50% of people become constipated when they



travel, says gastroenterologist Dr Ed Levine. Changes in your circadian rhythm throw off the hormones that help food and waste move through your gut. When the bacteria in your intestines produce air, it can get trapped in your digestive tract and cause bloating. Prevent it by sticking to your bedtime and mealtime routines as much as possible.

WORK DEADLINE “When you experience fight-or-flight symptoms, like a racing heart, your body diverts blood flow away from your GI tract, which slows down digestion,” says Levine. Heavy breathing, which occurs when you’re under stress, makes you swallow more air than usual and can also lead to bloating. To feel better, simply focus on changing your breathing pattern so you exhale for a few counts longer than you inhale. This turns off the stress response and moves your body into a calmer state.

NEWS FROM THE World of Medicine

The Bacteria In a Smooch

How much do you share in a kiss? Dutch researchers tracked how kissing affected the oral bacteria of 21 couples. They asked one person in each pair to consume a probiotic yoghurt drink with specific bacterial strains (to track their spread) and then to share a ten-second kiss with his or her partner. The average kiss transferred as many as 80 million bacteria. Sound icky? Not quite. Experts say exposure to someone else's bacteria could help strengthen your immunity.

Preterm Delivery Linked To Heart Risks

Women who experience spontaneous preterm delivery (before 37 weeks) may have a greater likelihood of heart disease, according to a new Dutch study. Mothers of preemies had a 38% higher risk of coronary artery disease, a 71% higher risk of stroke,

and more than double the risk of overall heart disease. Researchers say these women may be prone to inflammation, which is linked to preterm delivery and common among heart disease patients.

New Diet Plan for Diabetes

People with diabetes are often told to eat small meals throughout the day, but fewer, bigger meals may be better. Czech researchers analysed data from a study comparing two diets in 54 people with type 2 diabetes. The participants were split into two groups and ate either six small meals

a day for 12 weeks or a large high-fibre breakfast and lunch (but no dinner) for 12 weeks, then swapped for 12 more weeks. The two meals a day groups reported feeling less hungry, lost more weight, had lower blood sugar, and noted stark improvements in mood.



0.9
kilograms

The maximum amount of weight you should lose in a week, in most cases. Any higher loss can lead to severe fatigue due to insufficient calories.

Fix an Energy Crisis

Feeling tired is a common complaint. If you've already ruled out illness, the trouble likely lies in your lifestyle. Putting a spring back in your step could be a simple matter of tweaking daily habits: getting outside more often, for example, drinking more water or meeting the recommended target of seven to nine hours of sleep every night.

RETHINK YOUR SCHEDULE: "Let's say you lean naturally towards going to bed late, past 1am, for instance," says Till Roenneburg, a chronobiologist at Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich. "If that's the case, social norms [such as office hours that start at 9am] will conflict with your biological clock." Central to how the body operates, your biological clock (also known as the body's circadian rhythm) controls metabolism, behaviour and cognition. In a perfect world, sufferers of what Roenneburg dubs "social jet lag" would be able to adjust their personal and professional lives to match

their bodies. But if your timetable is inflexible, try pushing your sleep cycle earlier by absorbing lots of bright light in the morning and keeping to dim environments in the evening.

WATCH THOSE EXTRA KILOS:

Carrying extra weight is a well-known contributor to fatigue, with obese people traditionally reporting higher rates of tiredness.

Though the root cause isn't quite clear, this lethargy is frequently attributed to sleep apnoea, metabolic issues and psychological distress.

Achieving a healthy weight will help boost energy levels, but be careful to pace your efforts: over-exercising and crash dieting are surefire ways to deplete your batteries even further.



PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

Medicine Cabinet Maintenance 101

BY JACKIE MIDDLETON

Be prepared to deal with daily mishaps by stocking your chest with the right items. Here's what you need to include:

FIRST-AID SHELF

■ Stock a few different types of painkillers. "Paracetamol will help with fever and pain, whereas ibuprofen will assist with inflammation, too," says pharmacist Victor Wong. Talk with your doctor about the variety that is best for your most common ailments.

■ Stock up on adhesive bandages and dressings, and ensure that they're within their expiry dates. The sticky adhesive can deteriorate over time, and some brands contain an antibiotic ointment that will expire.

■ A wound steriliser, such as iodine or saline wash, helps clean cuts and scrapes, while antibiotic ointment prevents infection. Don't use hydrogen peroxide on fresh cuts.

Recent studies have shown that it can impair wound healing.

COLD AND ALLERGY SHELF

■ Be prepared for a cold with vapourisers and saline or decongestant nasal sprays. They can open up congested nasal passages so you can breathe with ease. Soothe coughs, sore throats and aches with a combination cold product. Keep both daytime and evening formulas on hand. "The daytime version won't make you drowsy, and the nighttime version will help you get some much needed rest," says Wong.

■ Fevers are a common complaint in cold and flu season. Keep a digital thermometer for accurate readings.

■ Antihistamines can help with seasonal allergies, as well as allergic reactions. Some products can cause daytime drowsiness, so choose one that won't make you sleepy if you're working or driving.



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

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*The most wasted of all days
is one without laughter*

E.E. CUMMINGS, poet



We help you get motivated

#QuotableQuotes and
#PointstoPonder to get you
through the day





Seeds of Success

Maximise your garden returns with these simple strategies

Many of us balk at growing plants from seeds, despite this being an easy way to save enormously on plant costs, not to mention the wider variety available. These tips will help even novices grow like green thumbs.

■ Read the instructions carefully. Different seeds germinate well at different temperatures or times of year, and with particular levels of soil covering, moisture and light. Some even require pre-chilling or soaking, or smoking over a fire.

■ Check the use-by date. Old seeds may still germinate, but will be less successful than fresh ones.

■ Clean your seed trays, especially if they have been used previously or stored for long periods of time. Wash

and rinse as though they were dirty dishes and leave to air dry.

■ Egg cartons are a good alternative to seed trays. They can be cut up and planted out with the seedling.

■ Use a specialist seed raising mix or lighten potting mix with perlite or gritty sand.

■ Provide protection from birds, wind, harsh sun and pets. Plastic domes are available at nurseries, or use old sheets of clear plastic roofing or glass. Be careful with glass if the seedlings are in full sun, you may need to ensure good ventilation beneath it to keep temperatures from climbing too high.

■ Keep the mix damp but not wet. Most seed failures come down to drying out or drowning.

Here Comes the Shade

Protect your plants from the hottest summer sun

QUICK FIX

If you're renting or have only a small area that hits Saharan conditions on a handful of days a year, you want a fix that is temporary. Buy lengths of shade cloth – 50% to 70% strength will do – and drape them over your most tender plants. You can use ziplock ties or spring-loaded clamps from the hardware store to attach the cloth to fence tops and tent it down over pots or nearby beds, which will keep air flowing beneath and help avoid fungal problems.

SLAP UP A SCREEN

For a more significant solution, erect screens in your garden. The classic pergola is one option, but it takes up a lot of space and often requires planning permission. Simple slot-together vertical screens are available in steel, aluminium and timber versions from most hardware



stores and take up a fraction of the garden space. By positioning them carefully, you can block the afternoon rays that cause most damage.

LANDSCAPE FOR CONSTANT COOL

Trees can take years to reach shading heights: try raising the soil level before you plant. A 1m mound will give your

tree an extra two years of height and help with drainage. Shade sails and awnings can be installed in a weekend. Water features cool everything around them, as do green walls: even bamboo slatting to cover the heat reflected from a wall or fence can drop the temperature by degrees. All artificial surfaces are hotter than plants on a sunny day, so minimise your paving and bare walls in heat trap areas and use finishes like sandstone that neither hold heat nor reflect it at crisping levels.



How to House Swap Safely

BY KATHY BUCHANAN

Want to stay around the world for free? House swapping is a fun way to live like a local overseas. Here are some tips to help you swap.

HOW TO START: Join a reputable house swapping site with homes available in the cities you want to visit. While it costs nothing to browse properties, you will need to pay an annual subscription fee (around R1000) to communicate with potential home swappers and to have your own home profiled on the website. The swapping itself is free so no other money should change hands.

SECURE INSURANCE: Having the right insurance is your responsibility. As soon as you discuss travel arrangements, call your home and car insurance company. Also ensure the home you are staying in is properly covered and check who

carries the cost of any extra premium fee if the swap takes place.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK: Arrange a call with your swappers to “meet” them. Ask for and provide references. Ensure you have the name of a local trusted friend or family member of theirs you can contact in case of emergency. Provide the same, plus a local doctor, hospital, pharmacy, vet, mechanic and your travel details.

CONSIDER PETS: Taking care of the house owner’s pet can often be part of the deal. Leave clear instructions and enough supplies for the whole period of the swap.

BE THOUGHTFUL: Leave basic supplies like milk and bread. Write a welcome note and share local faves. Lock away valuables and make it clear what is OK to use (bed linen, pantry staples) and what is not OK to use (evening wear, wine collection). Reports of theft or damage are rare in the house swapping community, but it’s always better to be safe than sorry.

5 Bike-Friendly Cities

BY ADAM HODGE

AMSTERDAM, The Netherlands. With more bikes than people, the city is structured with cyclists in mind. Low speed limits in the centre curb the impact of cars, while bike racks on public transport make it easy to travel long distances. Rental shops are ubiquitous, the terrain is famously flat, and an online bike route planner makes it easy.

BERLIN, Germany. With over 1000km of bike paths, the vast majority of which are protected lanes, it's no wonder Berliners love to get around by bike. For the traveller, the major sights are within easy reach on a bicycle. The "Call A Bike" share system allows you to simply lock the bike to any fixed object and call in a code to "return" it.

PARIS, France. Home to the Vélib' public bike sharing system that has over 20,000 bikes, and with 500km of bike paths, Paris cyclists can enjoy the city safe from motorists. A Velib' station is almost always within sight, or just around the next corner.



TOKYO, Japan. Despite being home to one of the most expansive public transit networks on the planet, Tokyo residents still cycle in large numbers. Though the extent of bike lanes is limited, safe drivers ease the tension between car and cyclist. Unique automated underground bike parking garages provide for a bit of a technological thrill when you need to stash your ride.

PERTH, Australia. A large chunk of Perth's intelligent infrastructure is made up of bike paths, which allow commuters to get into and around their city with ease. There are free bike lockers and racks across the city. For the visitor, numerous scenic routes line the coastline and the local Swan River. And the best way to see Rottnest Island, a vehicle-free island park, is by bicycle.



The Packing Peanut

Light and airy, these polystyrene bits cushion delicate items in packages

BY DANIEL ENGBER *From The New York Times*

In 1960, a research chemist named Maurice Laverne Zweigle packed a raw egg and a few handfuls of skinny, bendy, polystyrene noodles into a small cardboard box, sealed the flaps and tossed it off a third-floor roof. His invention worked: the egg was unscathed.

"At first we called it 'spaghetti,'" said Zweigle, now 89. The tubular shape was his key discovery: plastic spheres would have slid around the fragile item and let it fall to the bottom, but the noodles tangled together to form a secure nest.

Zweigle's employer, Dow Chemical Company, soon began to sell futuristic packing foam to consumers. The company presented polystyrene fill at a plastics exposition at the New York

Coliseum in the summer of 1961. Sold in bulk, the foam was meant to be a substitute for shredded paper, sawdust, ribbons of wood and even popcorn. Polystyrene proved to be much lighter than these other options and less susceptible to moisture and verminous infestation.

Zweigle's original shape did pose some problems, though. The 13cm tubes were tricky to produce, and they could get caught up in factory hoppers. So Zweigle cut his noodles down to smaller sizes, eventually creating the polystyrene fill we see today which takes the form of figure eights or fattened S's. Whatever their shape, these products are now described as "packing peanuts".

Keeping Good Company

So, you take great care of your pet. But what has your pet done for you lately? Turns out a lot more than you thought.

COMMUNITY BONDING While you're clearly going to meet people while walking your dog, a 2015 study by the University of Western Australia reported dog owners were five times more likely to get to know people in their local neighbourhood, compared to other pet owners. Yet owning a cat, rabbit or bird also provides a connecting point with like-minded people in your area or at work. The study found 42% of pet owners had received some kind of social support from someone they met via their pet.

PETS AS ICE BREAKERS Our furry, feathered and aquatic friends can provide the perfect conversation starters. Bonding over a pet is a



neutral and safe conversation starter. It may even help your dating life. A British poll found that 82% of women said they are more attracted to men who like animals.

HEALTH BENEFITS Stroking a cat or simply watching a fish swim in an aquarium helps us to relax, reducing your heartbeat rate and lowering blood pressure. Research has shown that this effect is particularly marked in people suffering from high blood pressure. One study found that over a ten-year period cat owners were 30% less likely to die of a heart attack or stroke than non-cat owners. A general increase in physical activity with certain pets like dogs or horses is a welcome bonus. Sharing your life with an animal also offers psychological benefits, including a general feeling of emotional support.

POVERTY, CRIME, AND
VIOLENCE ARE DOWN.
FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY
ARE UP. GUESS WHAT...

THE WORLD IS **NOT** FALLING APART

BY STEVEN PINKER & ANDREW MACK
FROM SLATE.COM



IT'S A GOOD TIME TO BE A PESSIMIST. ISIS, Crimea, Donetsk, Gaza, Myanmar, Ebola – who can avoid the feeling that things fall apart, the centre cannot hold? But as troubling as the headlines have been, they deserve a second look. It's hard to believe that we are in greater danger today than we were during the two world wars, the nuclear confrontations of the Cold War, the numerous conflicts in Africa and Asia that each claimed millions of lives or the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq that threatened to cripple the entire global economy.

So how can we get less hyperbolic about the state of the world? Certainly not from daily journalism. News is about things that happen, not things that don't happen. We never see a reporter saying to the camera, "Here we are, live from a country where a war has not broken out" or a city that has not been bombed or a school that has not been shot up. As long as violence has not vanished from the world, there will be incidents to fill the evening news. And since the human mind estimates probability by the ease with which it can recall examples, we will always perceive that we live in dangerous times.

We also have to avoid being fooled by randomness. Entropy, pathogens, and human folly are always present in our lives, and it's statistically certain that disasters will frequently overlap with one another rather than space themselves evenly in time. But to read significance into any such clusters is to succumb to primitive thinking and cosmic conspiracies.

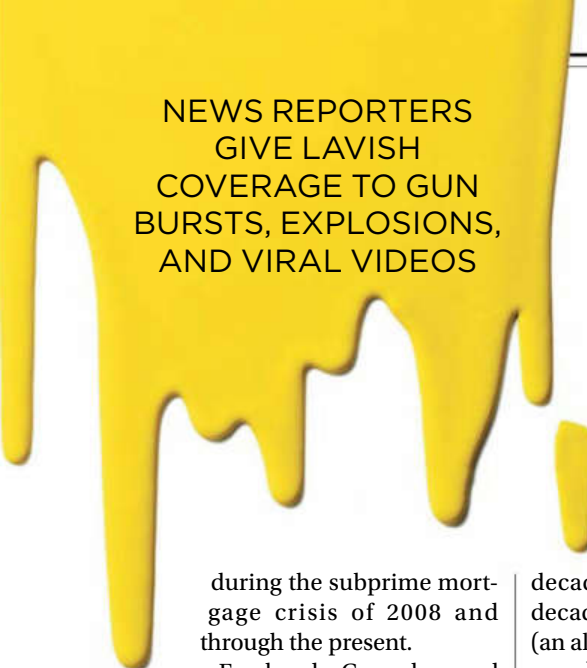
Finally, we need to be mindful of orders of magnitude. Some types of violence, like shooting rampages and

terrorist attacks, are riveting dramas but, outside of war zones, kill relatively few. Each day in the US, for instance, ordinary homicides claim one and a half times as many as the number who died in the infamous Sandy Hook school massacre.

The only sound way to appraise the state of the world is to count: How many violent acts has the world seen compared with the number of opportunities? And is that number going up or down? As former US president Bill Clinton likes to say, "Follow the trend lines, not the headlines." When we do, we can see that the trend lines are more encouraging than a news watcher would guess.

HOMICIDE

Worldwide, about five to ten times as many people die in standard homicides as die in wars, and in most of the world, the rate of homicide has been falling. The American crime decline of the 1990s, which plateaued at the start of this century, resumed in 2006; defying the conventional wisdom that hard times lead to violence, it continued



NEWS REPORTERS GIVE LAVISH COVERAGE TO GUN BURSTS, EXPLOSIONS, AND VIRAL VIDEOS

during the subprime mortgage crisis of 2008 and through the present.

England, Canada, and most other industrialised countries have also seen homicide rates fall in the past decade. Among the 88 countries with reliable data, 67 have shown a decline in the past 15 years. Although numbers for the entire world exist only for this millennium and include heroic guesstimates for countries that are data deserts, the trend appears to be downward, from 7.1 homicides per 100,000 people in 2003 to 6.2 in 2012.

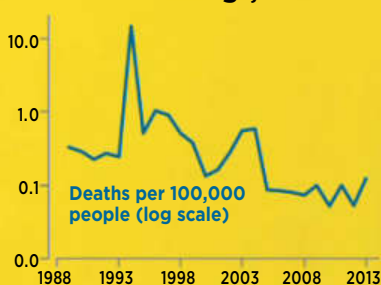
The global average, to be sure, conceals many regions with horrific rates of killing, particularly in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. But even in those hot zones, it is easy for headlines to mislead. For example, the gory, drug-fuelled killings in parts of Mexico can create an impression that the entire country has spiralled into

lawlessness, but two factors can help dispel that notion. One is that the 21st-century spike has not undone the massive reduction in homicide that Mexico has enjoyed since 1940. The other is that what goes up often comes down. The rate of Mexican homicide has declined in each of the past two years, and many other notoriously dangerous regions have experienced significant turn-arounds, including Bogotá, Colombia (down 85% in two decades), São Paulo (down 70% in a decade), the favelas of Rio de Janeiro (an almost two-thirds reduction in four years), Russia (down 46% in six years), and South Africa (a halving from 1995 to 2011). Many criminologists believe that a worldwide reduction in homicide by 50% in the next three decades is a feasible target for the upcoming round of Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Intense media coverage of famous athletes who have assaulted their wives or girlfriends, and of episodes of rape on college campuses has suggested to some observers that we are witnessing a surge of violence against women. But victimisation surveys such as those conducted by the US Bureau of Justice Statistics (which circumvent the problem of under-reporting to the police)

Rate of Deaths in Genocides and Other Mass Killings, 1989–2013



pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp_onesided_violence_dataset/
census.gov/population/international/data/worldpop/table_population.php

show the opposite: Rates of rape or sexual assault and of violence against intimate partners have been declining for decades, and they're now a quarter or less of their peaks in the past. Far too many of these horrendous crimes still take place, but we should be encouraged by the fact that a heightened concern about violence against women is not futile moralising but has brought about measurable progress – and can lead to greater progress still.

In 1993 the UN General Assembly adopted a Declaration on the

Elimination of Violence Against Women, and polling data show widespread support for women's rights, even in countries with the most benighted practices. Many countries have implemented laws and public awareness campaigns to reduce rape, forced marriage, genital mutilation, honour killings, domestic violence, and wartime atrocities. Though some of these measures are toothless, and the effectiveness of others has yet to be established, there are grounds for optimism over the long term. Global shaming campaigns, even when they start out as purely aspirational, have led in the past to dramatic reductions of practices such as slavery, duelling, whaling, foot binding, piracy, chemical warfare, apartheid, and atmospheric nuclear testing.

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Similarly, news reports on abductions, cyberbullying, and sexual and physical abuse can make it seem as if children are living in increasingly perilous times. But the data say otherwise. In a recent review of the literature on violence against children in the US, sociologist David Finkelhor and his colleagues reported that “of 50 trends in exposure examined, there were 27 significant declines and no significant increases between 2003 and 2011. Declines were particularly large for

assault victimisation, bullying, and sexual victimisation." Similar trends can be seen elsewhere, and international declarations have made the reduction of violence against children into a global issue.

GENOCIDE AND OTHER MASS KILLINGS OF CIVILIANS

The recent atrocities committed by ISIS, together with the ongoing killing of civilians in Syria, Iraq, and central Africa, have fed a terrifying narrative in which the world has apparently learned nothing from past genocides. But even the most horrific events of the present must be put into historical perspective.

By any standard, the world is nowhere near as genocidal as it was during its peak in the 1940s, when Nazi, Soviet, and Japanese mass murders, together with the targeting of civilians by all sides in World War II, resulted in an annual civilian death rate of 350 deaths per 100,000 people. Stalin and Mao kept the global rate between 75 and 150 through the early 1960s, and it has been falling ever since though punctuated by spikes in Biafra (1966–1970; 200,000 deaths), Sudan (1983–2002; one million), Afghanistan (1978–2002; one million), Indonesia (1965–1966; 500,000), Angola (1975–2002; one million), Rwanda (1994; 500,000), and Bosnia (1992–1995; 200,000). These numbers must be kept in mind when we read

of current horrors in Iraq (2003–2014; 150,000 deaths) and Syria (2011–2014; 150,000), and interpret them as signs of a dark new era. Nor, tragically, are the beheadings and crucifixions of the Islamic State historically unusual. Many postwar genocides were accompanied by splurges of ghastly torture and mutilation. The main difference is that they were not broadcast on social media.

The trend lines for genocide and other civilian killings, fortunately, point sharply downward. Although comparisons to the cruder data of previous decades are iffy, the numbers suggest the rate of civilian killings has dropped by about three orders of magnitude since the decade after World War II and by four orders of magnitude since the war itself. In other words, the world's civilians are several thousand times less likely to be targeted today than they were 70 years ago.

WAR

Researchers who track war and peace distinguish "armed conflicts", which kill as few as 25 soldiers and civilians caught in the line of fire in a year, from "wars", which kill more than a thousand. They also distinguish "interstate" conflicts, which pit the armed forces of two or more states against each other, from "intrastate" or "civil" conflicts, which pit a state against an insurgency or separatist force, sometimes with the armed intervention of an external state.

In a historically unprecedented

development, the number of interstate wars has plummeted since 1945, and the most destructive kind of war – in which great powers fight one another – has vanished altogether.

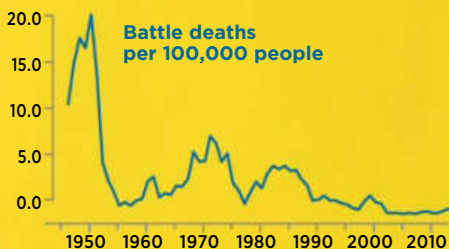
Today the world rarely sees a major naval battle, or masses of tanks and heavy artillery shelling each other across a battlefield.

The end of the Cold War saw a steep reduction in the number of armed conflicts of all kinds, including civil wars, and recent events have not reversed this trend. In 2013, there were 33 state-based armed conflicts in the world, a number that falls within the range of the past dozen years and well below the high of 52 that occurred shortly after the end of the Cold War. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program has noted that 2013 saw the signing of six peace agreements, two more than in the previous year.

But another recent development in wars is less positive: The number of wars jumped from four in 2010 to seven in 2013. These wars were fought in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Sudan, and Syria. Four new wars have broken out since January 2014, leading to a total of 11.

The worldwide rate of battle deaths through 2013 has also risen, mostly because of the Syrian civil war. Even so, this increase must be kept in perspective. While it has undone the progress of the past dozen years, the

Rate of Battle Deaths in Armed Conflicts, 1946–2013



"Updated Statistical Analysis of Documentation of Killings in the Syrian Arab Republic"; Human Rights Data Analysis Group

rates are still well below those of the 1990s and nowhere near the levels of the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s or 1980s.

LOOK FOR THE HOPE, NOT THE HYPE

We have been told of impending doom before: a Soviet invasion of Western Europe, a line of dominoes in South-east Asia, revanchism in a reunified Germany, a rising sun in Japan, cities overrun by teenage superpredators, a coming anarchy that would fracture the major nation-states, and weekly

9/11-scale attacks that would pose an existential threat to civilisation.

Why is the world always “more dangerous than it has ever been” – even as a greater and greater majority of humanity live in peace and die of old age?

Too much of our impression of the world comes from a misleading formula of journalistic narration. Reporters give lavish coverage to gun bursts, explosions, and viral videos, oblivious to how representative they are and apparently innocent of the fact that many were contrived as journalist bait. Then come sound bites from “experts” with vested interests in maximising the impression of mayhem: generals, politicians, security officials, moral activists. The talking heads on cable news filibuster about the event, desperately hoping to

avoid dead air. Newspaper columnists instruct their readers on what emotions to feel.

There is a better way to understand the world. Commentators can brush up their history by recounting the events of the recent past that put the events of the present in an intelligible context. And they could consult datasets on violence that are now just a few clicks away.

An evidence-based mindset on the state of the world would bring many benefits. It would calibrate our national and international responses to the magnitude of the dangers that face us. It would limit the influence of terrorists, school shooters, decapitation cinematographers, and other violence impresarios. It might even dispel foreboding and embody, again, the hope of the world. **R**

SLATE (DECEMBER 22, 2014). © 2014 BY SLATE.COM.

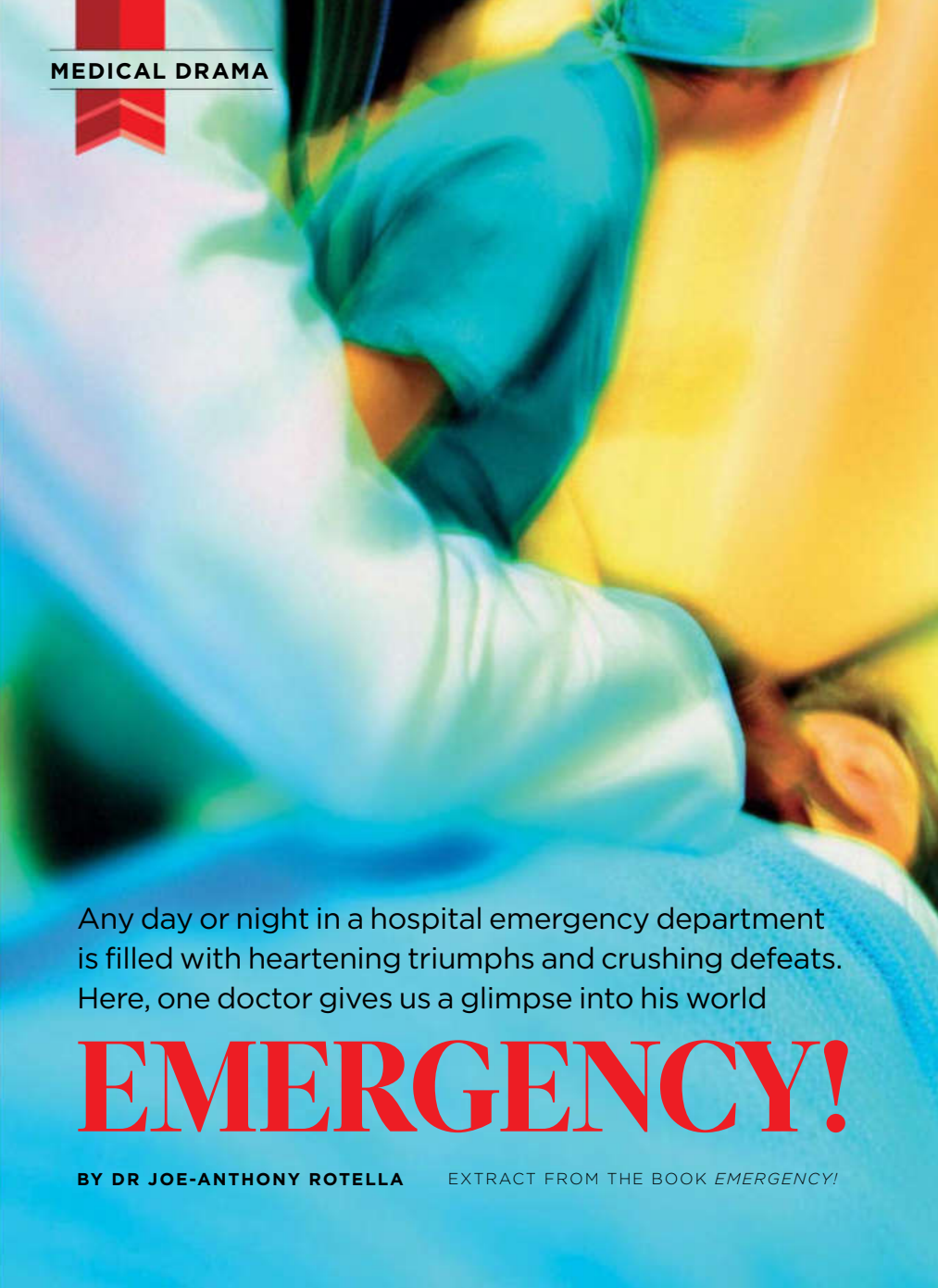


INFAMOUS FIRST WORDS

Every year the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest awards prizes for the worst opening lines to imaginary novels. The 2014 runner-up for crime is a particular gem:

Hard-boiled private eye Smith Calloway had a sinking feeling as he walked into the chaotic crime scene, for there, as expected, was the body dressed in a monk's habit; there was the stuffed cream-coloured pony next to the crisp apple strudel; there was the doorbell, the set of sleigh bells, and even the schnitzel with noodles – all proclaiming that the Von Trappist Killer had struck again.

JOSHUA LONG, HARRISON, OHIO, US



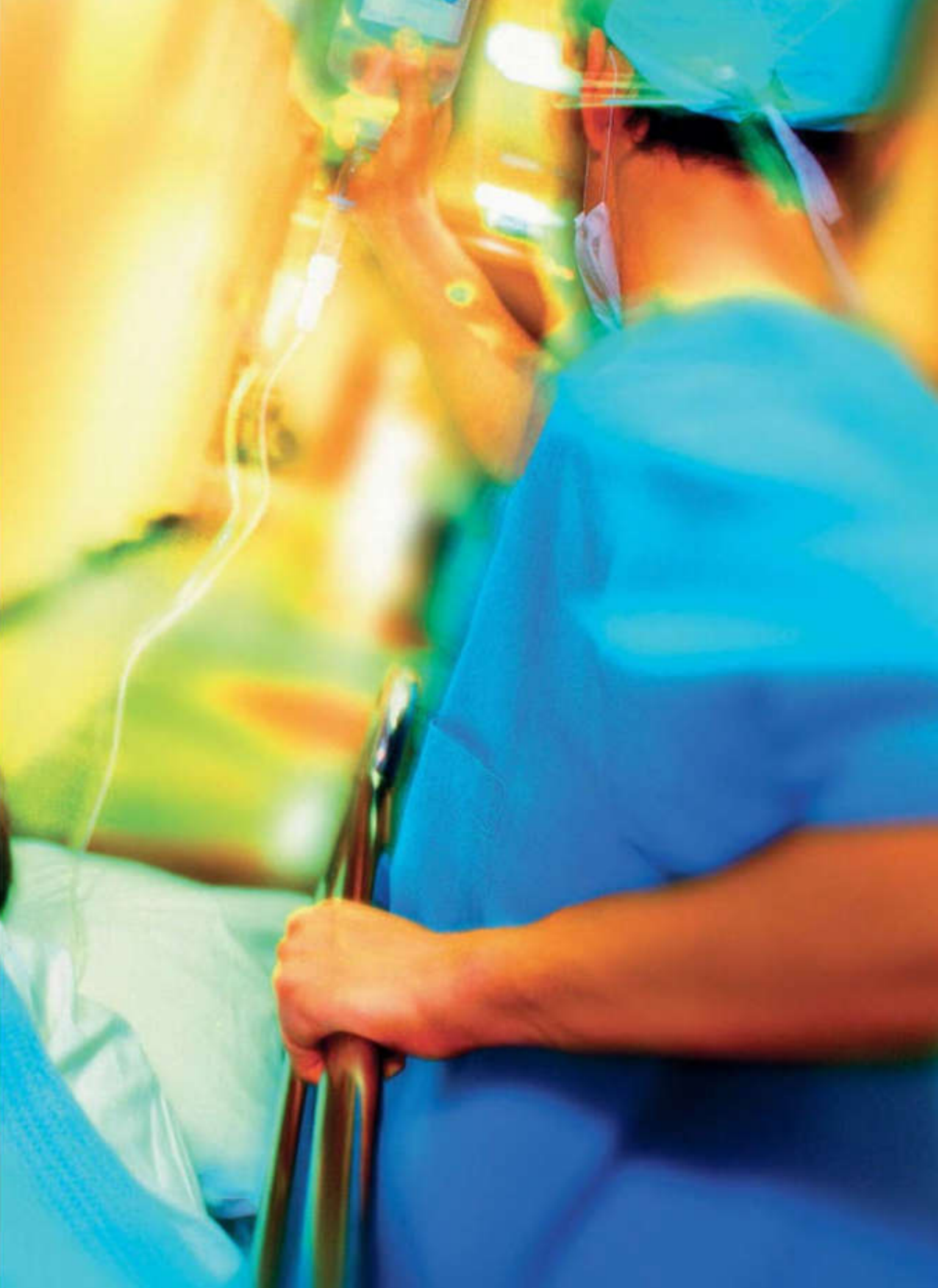
MEDICAL DRAMA

Any day or night in a hospital emergency department is filled with heartening triumphs and crushing defeats. Here, one doctor gives us a glimpse into his world

EMERGENCY!

BY DR JOE-ANTHONY ROTELLA

EXTRACT FROM THE BOOK *EMERGENCY!*



OUR PATIENT had been at school; she was laughing, playing with a friend at lunchtime. “Do you want to have some of this?” her friend asked, holding out the chicken satay her mum had made at home.

“Sure.”

It only took the tiniest bite to set off the allergic reaction that pushed the 12-year-old to the brink and over the edge. As the reaction took hold, her lungs tightened up, her lips swelled, her heart started to race and her blood pressure plummeted. And with that, she lost consciousness.

Panic ensued, but the school nurse maintained her composure and reacted. An EpiPen in the leg, then a call to the ambulance. Another EpiPen followed. But still no effect. The storm had already taken hold...

The ambulance crew arrived to find no blood pressure and no air going into her lungs. She was on the edge of the cliff and about to fall off.

It was then that her heart stopped for the first time. They did chest compressions, inserted a breathing tube and IV lines and gave more adrenaline. Her heart restarted. They gave more adrenaline to keep it going.

And more...

...and more...

Her lungs were so inflamed that trying to ventilate was like trying to push air into a bag of wet sand.

In the back of the ambulance, the oxygen was squeezed in and out of those bags of sand. The ambulance

crew called ahead to let us know they were coming.

WE ARE READY. *Our team is well drilled. Staff know what to do and when to do it.*

“One, two, three...” slide across to our resuscitation trolley. The machine snaps into action. The team leader barks the instructions.

“Airway check?”

“Tube is OK.”

“Breathing?”

“Terrible; can’t ventilate.”

“Circulation?”

“Thready; can just get a pulse.”

“Adrenaline infusion.”

“Get a gas off.” A blood gas analysis gives us a good indication of how deep a hole we are in. It is a very deep hole.

Despite all the oxygen we are trying to deliver, all the adrenaline we are giving, the shock is so profound that we are losing her. It’s a rapid spiral downhill from here. If we can’t get oxygen in, the shock gets worse, the blood pressure worsens, and the closer this patient gets to dying.

The intensive care team, the anaesthetists all come to help.

A discussion ensues. The parents are informed. They know this is grave. Their little girl is very sick. In fact, at this moment, she is the sickest patient in the whole hospital.

Dr Joe-Anthony Rotella is an Emergency Medicine Registrar at Austin Health in Heidelberg, Victoria.

"What about bypass?"

Everyone agrees it's the only thing we can do. The decision is made that our patient will be put on a form of bypass: artificial lungs. Her lungs are so compromised that they can't recover quickly enough to see her live.

Our cardiac team is in theatre, just about to scrub in for an operation. They put that on hold and arrive in the ED within minutes. Quick conversations, nods of heads; equipment is retrieved and the patient is prepped.

Her parents sit and wait; not knowing what to do, but trusting that everything will be done. They are soon joined by their extended family and they sit in silence with the hospital social worker. Hoping, praying.

The large lines that are needed for the machinery that will hopefully keep her alive are inserted into her groin. We don't usually do this for kids, so the smallest adult sizes are used on her tiny blood vessels.

The shock has affected her clotting. Her blood is thin and she won't stop bleeding. Blood is coming up the breathing tube and oozing from around all the lines. She has become a leaky sponge. Medications, blood and clotting factors are given to try to reverse this process. It makes the situation even more tenuous.

As the bypass is started, the adrenaline we have been giving her suddenly washes back into her system. Her heart can't cope with the surge and starts to fibrillate – imagine jelly quivering; the heart is completely ineffective. She has had a cardiac arrest. Her heart has stopped again. This could be the end.

Compressions begin again. "Should we shock her?"

"Wait. Let the surgeons finish." Almost there.

"Can we shock her?"

"Wait."



***Her heart has
stopped again.
This could be
the end.
Compressions
begin again.
"Should we
shock her?"***

The surgeon steps back. "Stand back."

A jolt of electricity jerks through her heart. "Sinus rhythm." Her heart is beating again.

A collective sigh, a collective feeling of elation. We are back in with a chance.

We continue to stabilise her. The dials are tweaked to get the right balance of blood flow.

The oxygen levels are monitored.

"HER PARENTS NEED TO SEE HER." *In all the activity, the focus, we lost time. Her family are anxiously waiting.*

We look at this tiny body, this daughter, sister, friend. Lines in, attached to tubes and machines. Blood, bruises, wet hair, naked.

Her family can't see this.

The nursing staff do what they can to transform her back into a semblance of their little girl.

Anxious, scared, disbelieving. Despairing and broken. I don't really know what words to use; all of them. You can see the physical transformation as the parents enter the room, energy drained. They are supporting each other, each stopping the other from collapsing. For our patient's family, this is not happening, this is surreal, this is just a terrible nightmare. This is not meant to happen to their little girl... or anyone's.

We aren't finished. The intensive care unit for children is on the other side of the city. Its paediatric team arrive to take care of our little girl and transfer her there.

Her lines are changed, her chest is opened to insert new lines and attach different equipment. She is cooled to save her brain. No-one knows what will happen, but they keep trying everything.

SLOWLY, OVER DAYS, *she starts to improve. The machinery slows down.*

Her lungs start to heal. They are able to begin the work they used to do: move oxygen to keep her alive.

She is woken up; she sees Mum and Dad by her bed, crying.

Four weeks after we treated her, I get a call from my boss telling me that our miracle girl and her family are coming to visit. I am on my day off but come in anyway to see how she is. I'm stunned to see someone who looks like she should be visiting a relative.

Gone are all the tubes and blood; they're replaced by a smiling, healthy

young girl. I'm introduced to her as "one of the doctors who did CPR on you". I never thought I'd ever be introduced like that to someone. I give her a hug, amazed at how different she looks, how well she looks.

"Thank you for saving me," she tells our staff. Hands are shaken, hugs given and slaps on the

back dished out liberally. We will remember every little detail and we will never forget.

And we will do it all again and again. It's what we do. **R**

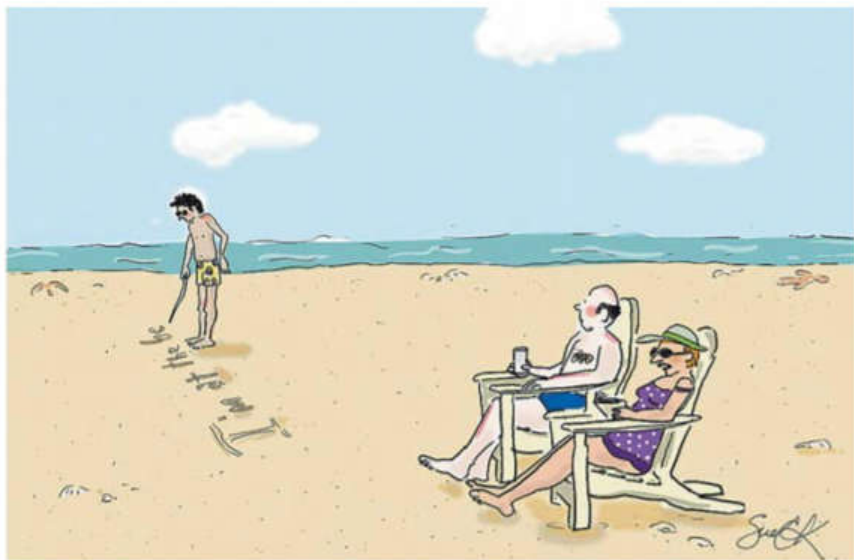
For our patient's family, this is not happening, this is surreal, this is just a terrible nightmare. This is not meant to happen

From *Emergency*, edited by
Dr Simon Judkins,
published
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Anthony Rotella
and the
Australasian
College for
Emergency
Medicine.



Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE



"I took his phone away."

BUCKLE UP

I think my pilot was a little inexperienced. We were sitting on the runway, and he said, "OK, folks, we're gonna be taking off in just a few...*Whoa!* Here we go."

COMEDIAN KEVIN NEALON

NOT TO BE COUNTED ON

Q: What did the schizophrenic bookkeeper say?

A: "I hear invoices."

SUBMITTED BY STEPHEN PICKERING

HOOK, LINE AND SINKER

Q: What did the pirate say when he turned 80?

A: "Aye Matey!"

Source: buzzfeed.com



QUICK STUDY

I've taken up speed-reading. I can read *War and Peace* in 20 seconds. It's only three words, but it's a start.

COMEDIAN TIM VINE



Even though I'm proud my dad invented the rear-view mirror, we're not as close as we appear. COMEDIAN STEWART FRANCIS

PLANNING AHEAD

I've never been good with maths, but I accepted it from an early age. My teacher would hand me a maths test, and I'd just write, "I'm going to marry someone who can do this."

COMEDIAN RITA RUDNER

RISQUÉ BUSINESS

At a nudist colony for intellectuals, two old men are sitting on the porch. One turns to the other and says, "I say, old man, have you read Marx?"

The other replies, "Yes, it's these stupid wicker chairs."

SUBMITTED BY RYAN ROSWELL

MIND OUT

I just let my mind wander, and it didn't come back.

Seen on the internet

HEAVEN SENT

One Sunday morning, a preacher told his congregation, "Everyone who wants to go to heaven, come down to the front!" The whole church came forward except one member of the congregation. Thinking that perhaps the man hadn't heard him, the preacher repeated the invitation. Again, the man just sat there.

"Sir," said the preacher, "don't you want to go to heaven when you die?"

The man replied, "Oh, when I die! I thought you were getting a group ready to go right now."

Seen on the internet

MUSICAL MYSTERY

Q: What's the difference between rock and jazz?"

A: Rock is playing three chords for a thousand people. Jazz is playing a thousand chords for three people.

Source: reddit.com

HEALTHY SCEPTIC

I just got a fruit juicer because they say juicing adds years to your life. What they don't tell you is that the years you add juicing, you lose cleaning your juicer.

COMEDIAN
KYLE DUNNIGAN





WITH A SIDE ORDER OF SASS

Waitresses and deli hands have their own unique language. Connect the lingo below with the dish to see if you have what it takes to work in a traditional diner:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Battery Acid | A. Side order of hash |
| 2. Clean Up the Kitchen | B. Add chocolate syrup |
| 3. Drag One Through the Garden | C. Make it a takeout order |
| 4. Fly Cake | D. Add all the condiments |
| 5. Give it Shoes | E. Grapefruit juice |
| 6. Make it Cry | F. Raisin cake |
| 7. Rubber in a Bun | G. Add onions |
| 8. Throw it in the Mud | H. Steak sandwich |

ANSWERS: 1-E; 2-A; 3-D; 4-F; 5-C; 6-G; 7-H; 8-B.

Source: *Taste of Home*

GARDEN-VARIETY ASSAULT

One night, a lady with a black eye stumbled into a police station. She told the desk sergeant that she'd heard a noise in her back garden and had gone to investigate.



The next thing she knew, she was hit in the face and knocked out cold.

An officer was sent to her home and returned later, also sporting a whopper of a black eye.

"Did you get hit by the same attacker?" his boss asked.

"No sir, I didn't," he replied. "I stepped on the same rake."

SUBMITTED BY GLORIA WILDING

Last night I saw a man in the pub chatting up a woman while covered in mashed-up fruit and I thought, *He's a smoothie.*

COMEDIAN TONY COWARDS

MONEY MAKER

I've worked out that my new shadow puppet theatre could make millions, although that's just projected figures.

Seen on the internet

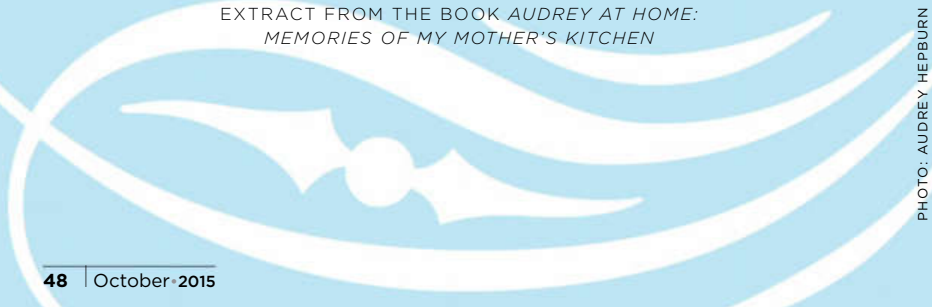




Breakfast at Audrey's

For Luca Dotti, the son of glamorous Hollywood actress Audrey Hepburn, growing up in his mother's home meant sticking to some never-fail old-fashioned rules - like a hearty breakfast

EXTRACT FROM THE BOOK *AUDREY AT HOME:
MEMORIES OF MY MOTHER'S KITCHEN*





*Audrey
Hepburn
and her son
Luca in 1973*



"MUM ALWAYS AWOKED early. When she was working as an actress she thought: *Sooner or later they will realise their mistake and will send me home.* To banish that fear, she would get up before "they" did, to go over her lines. In order to look impeccable on the set, fresh, without a single negative thought that might ruffle her smile, she had to arise between four and five in the morning and gather her strength.

Mum, like any wise family doctor, believed in the virtues of a good breakfast. She never skipped it, not even on her monthly "detox" day when she ate only plain yoghurt and grated apple.

She knew how to be persuasive, and from the time I was a little boy she would cut slices of buttered bread – she called them "fingers" (the French *mouillettes*) – for dipping in soft-boiled eggs. However, what left an impression about her breakfast went beyond those toasted rectangles of bread.

During the last years of her life, this morning interlude was also a time for confidences. If Sean [her other son] and I were at La Paisible [Audrey's Swiss home], breakfast would be in the kitchen's office. She would come downstairs in her robe, and while having a madeleine and a cup of *caffè latte*, almost unconsciously, small talk would turn into a confession.

Madeira
 4 uova
 1/2 lb. zucchero
 miscelare bene
 vaniglia
 4 Bianchi Battuti
 aggiungere
 1/2 lb. burro
 1/2 lb. farina

Handwritten ingredient notes, and family photographs provide a glimpse into Hepburn's intensely private world

MADELEINES

Makes 12 madeleines

"The madeleine is a cake of French origin. According to an often-romanticised story, King Louis XV named it after the pastry chef from Commercy who invented it. Later, Marcel Proust elevated the cake to the literary pantheon when, after dipping a madeleine in his tea, he set out 'in search of lost time'. Mum's version, however, was not very orthodox and showed the influence of the Anglo-Saxon muffin."

½ cup (70g) flour, plus extra for the madeleine pan

4 tablespoons* (55g) sugar

1 teaspoon (5g) yeast

1 egg

2 tablespoons (30mL) milk

3½ tablespoons (50g) unsalted butter, melted, plus extra for the madeleine pan

12-hole madeleine pan or 12-cup mini muffin pan and paper liners

Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F). Butter and flour a madeleine pan or insert the liners in the muffin pan.

Mix the flour, sugar, and yeast in a bowl. Beat the egg with the milk and melted butter; add to the flour

mixture, blending well. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Pour the batter into the prepared madeleine moulds or muffin cups (if using a muffin pan, fill cups halfway). Bake until the madeleines are golden brown, about 20 minutes. Remove the madeleines from the pan and let them cool before serving.

Variations: to flavour the madeleines you can replace one-third of the flour with an equivalent quantity of unsweetened powdered cocoa, or add chocolate chips to the batter.

* Recipe uses 15mL UK tablespoon.

One day she uneasily told me about the painful circumstances of her separation from my father [Italian psychiatrist Andrea Dotti]. I learned to know her better at the breakfast table.

But it was not always a time for discussion. Returning from a trip, or on a Sunday, the Dutch Calvinist would honour the day of rest with a small luxury, something unusual for

her: breakfast in bed. It was like a prize she awarded herself, and it was enjoyed all the more if the tray were filled with tidbits, such as home-made madeleines, quince jelly, or cherry jam, along with toast, coffee, milk, butter, a small rose from the garden in a tiny vase, and on the side of her tray the *International Herald Tribune*.^R

You can rev up
your thinking with
a few fun activities.
It's scientifically
proven

Stay Brainy

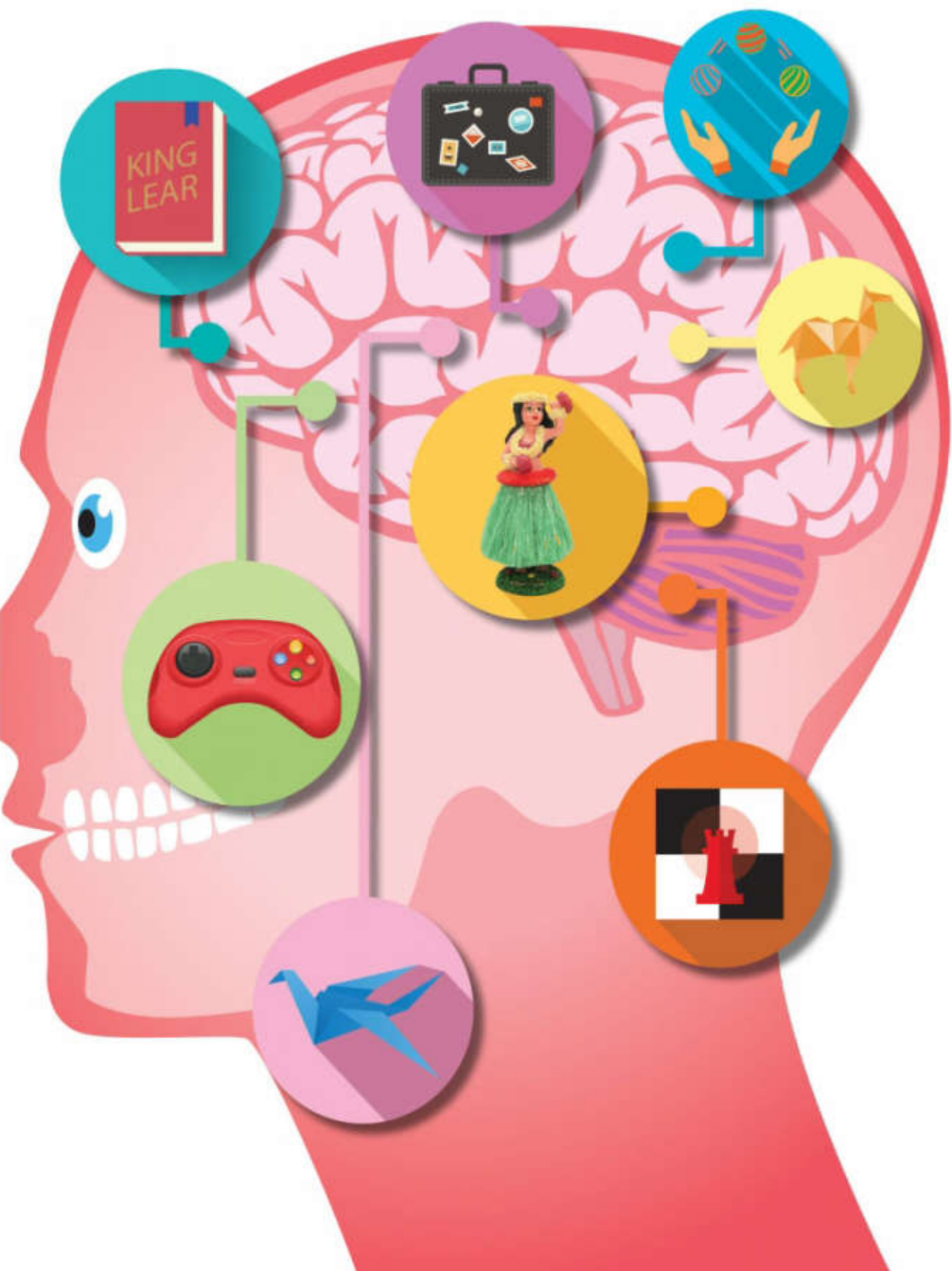
BY HELEN SIGNY

Not so long ago, we thought our brains had reached their peak by the time we hit adulthood and everything was simply downhill from there. But now we know that's not true – scientists have identified a process dubbed “neuroplasticity”, which acknowledges our brains are capable of growing and making new connections as we age.

Giving our brains a regular mental workout can reduce the risk of mild cognitive decline – the precursor to dementia – by as much as 40%, says

Dr Nicole Kochan, a clinical neuropsychologist and researcher with the University of New South Wales's Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing. And a recent study conducted by the Mayo Clinic in the US confirmed that elderly people who'd kept up a hobby – such as arts and crafts, social activities or computer use – since middle age were less likely to be affected by dementia.

It's due to a phenomenon called “cognitive reserve” – or the mind's resistance to damage of the brain. When we start developing dementia – usually several decades before we



notice symptoms – certain regions of the brain like the hippocampus start to shrink. However, complex activities boost new brain cells (grey matter) and improve the connections between them (white matter), which means less atrophy and shrinkage.

We also know that what's good for the body is good for the brain, says Suha Ali, risk reduction manager at Alzheimer's Australia. So there's another reason to exercise regularly. And being social gives our brains a boost too: spending time with others and having fun can contribute to brain reserve.

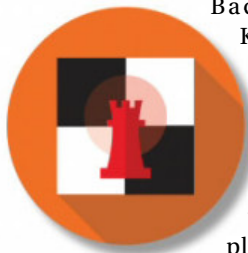
"Try to combine all three," says Ali, and the effects will multiply.

Here then, are some hobbies shown by science to boost the health of your brain – with extra tips to make them even more powerful, courtesy of brain training programme BrainHQ.

Learn Baduk

Baduk, an ancient Korean board game also known as "Go", is like a brain super food. One study used imaging to show that the brains of Baduk players had superior connectivity in the frontal

lobe, the limbic system, and the sub-cortex of the brain, meaning players' memory, concentration and problem-solving abilities were all enhanced.



TOP TIPS: MAINTAIN A HEALTHY HEART, WATCH YOUR WEIGHT AND DON'T SMOKE

In fact, all sorts of card and board games are great for your brain. The complexity of the game requires you to exercise your strategising, logic, initiative, memory and mathematics abilities, while the social aspect gives an added boost to brain health. The Paquid study, which followed 3777 French adults, looked at the links between board games and cognitive function and found people who played regularly had a 15% lower risk of developing dementia than non-players, even 20 years later.

Board games boost cognitive reserve because you have to adapt depending on whether you're winning or losing, and develop new strategies for next time.

Alternatives: Chess and card games like pinochle, hearts, cribbage and bridge can also stimulate your brain.

Added boost: Mentally challenge yourself to remember everyone's name and the cards they're holding.

Take up juggling

Any activity that helps improve your dexterity and hand-eye coordination is good for your brain. With juggling, you can challenge yourself by adding an

extra ball as your skill level improves.

One study scanned the brains of people who learned to juggle for 30 minutes a day over a six-week period. At the end of the study, participants had improved the white matter of the brain.

The researchers thought that this was partly because jugglers had better spatial awareness and had learnt to mentally rotate objects.

Juggling is also a physical activity you can do even if you're not very mobile, and displaying your new-found skills to others builds in social engagement.

Alternatives: Other sensory-guided movement activities that improve hand-eye coordination and mental rotation dexterity include ping pong, wrestling and dance.

Added boost: Try to juggle faster or longer. Change what you do each time, forcing your brain to adapt to the new challenge.

Join a book or movie club

Find a hobby that you enjoy – that way you're more likely to keep going. Most of us enjoy a good book or a movie, but



sharing the experience with others will further boost your brain.

"If you have someone to sit down and discuss it with, your memories become stronger, you talk about the storyline and people bring in their shared experiences," says Kochan. In a larger group, that effect will increase.

A recent study found that reading a novel improves brain function by enhancing connectivity across the left temporal cortex, associated with language comprehension, and also the central sulcus, the area of the brain associated with sensations and move-

TOP TIPS: FOLLOW A DIET RICH IN FISH, VEGETABLES, OLIVE OIL AND FRUIT

ment. The researchers suggested this latter may come from the reader literally putting themselves into the body of the book's protagonist – enhancing our senses of empathy and compassion.

Alternatives: Visits to an art gallery, a museum, the theatre or a concert will all stimulate the brain.

Added boost: Be mindful.

Try to understand the details of how the film or music is arranged, analyse the dialogue, or think deeply about the plot.



Go for a nature walk

Physical activity can boost the hippocampus, the memory coordination centre of the brain which is the first area affected by dementia. Try for at least 30 minutes of exercise a day, and if you can build that into a social activity, so much the better.

Stanford University researchers found that walking is a particularly good way of boosting creativity. Study participants were measured before and after a walk on a treadmill, and their scores for “creative divergent thinking” (generating creative ideas by exploring many possible solutions) and “convergent thinking” (giving the correct answer without thinking about it) were both better than those who remained seated in a chair. “Walking opens up the free flow of ideas, and it is a simple and robust solution to the goals of increasing creativity and increasing physical activity,” the study authors said.

Walking in the midst of nature seems to be especially good for the brain. One study found the intriguing stimuli in nature restored and replenished people’s ability to pay attention, whereas urban environments were not as restorative because the stimulation was too dramatic (for example, when you have to react to avoid being hit by a car).



TOP TIPS: AVOID BRAIN INJURY AND SEEK EARLY HELP FOR DEPRESSION

Alternatives: Lawn bowls, yoga and tai chi or other forms of gentle exercise.

Added boost: During a walk, try to commit small details of the landscape to memory. When you get home, try to reconstruct the walk in as much detail as possible.

Play a video game

Do computer games actually improve brain function or just make you better at playing computer games? Now, there’s evidence that they really do help your brain.

When you play a video game, you have to think quickly and hold multiple pieces of information in your mind. Recent research shows long-lasting benefits to basic mental processes such as perception, attention, memory and decision making.

One study showed that it wasn’t just the brains of elderly gamers that improved, but their self-esteem and quality of life was also better.

The key thing is that video games are interactive – you adapt yourself



to the game, which in turn adapts to you. There are millions of games to choose from and you can either play individually or against others online.

Video game suggestions: Brain Age and Super Mario on Wii, or NeuroRacer and Portal 2 on PlayStation.

Added boost: Mix it up. Play anything from shoot 'em up video games to brain-training quizzes.

Practise origami

The ancient art of paper folding boosts hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills and mental concentration. Your brain is challenged as you follow the instructions and the tactile, motor and visual areas are stimulated as you focus and plan your 3D creation.

Generally, any activity that uses creativity draws on executive function, says Dr Kochan. "You are adapting your work, you are making plans and you are drawing on higher level functions," she says.

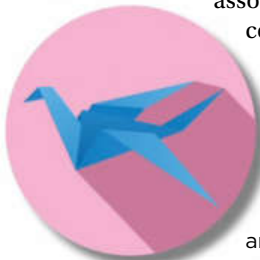
Crafting also helps you relax, almost as powerfully as meditation, and is associated with slower cognitive decline.

Alternatives:

Sewing, quilting, knitting new patterns, painting, model making, drawing and sculpting.

Added boost:

Find challenging projects or designs or try something new like adult colouring-in.



Join a dance class

A study conducted by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York found regular dancing contributed to a 76% reduction in the risk of developing dementia – greater than for any other hobby.

Any social activity that requires coordination, learning, motor sequencing, concentration and physical exercise is good for the brain.

Alternative activities:

Also try acting, aerobics or physical theatre, or learn to play a musical instrument.

Added boost: Keep your motivation up by joining a dance club and turning it into a social activity.



Go on a trip

New experiences and environments challenge the brain, building resilience and cognitive reserve. Travelling offers socialisation, fulfilment, and improves quality of life – and when you're on the road you're also more likely to be physically active, too.

Alternatives: Do a short course in woodwork or cooking, join a club or volunteer for charity.

Added boost: Sit somewhere unfamiliar and concentrate on everything you can see without moving your eyes, then write down everything you can remember.





Points to Ponder

UNCOMPLICATE IT. Don't make excuses. Some of life's biggest heartaches come from missed opportunities and lame excuses. Don't miss out on what could be the best chapter in your life because you're too busy rereading the last one.

KANDI STEINER,
writer, in Song Chaser

IN A WORLD with boundless opportunities for amusement, it's detestable that anyone would choose to get thrills from killing others who ask for nothing from life but the chance to remain alive.

SIR ROGER MOORE,
actor and conservationist,
on the killing of Cecil the Lion

AS SOON AS a large group of people or citizens laughs at something, it's never the same. That's the most powerful thing in the world. They say laughter is the best medicine, but it's the best revolution too.

ROSEANNE BARR,
comedian, on salon.com

[I'M] DISSATISFIED with the answer "I don't really like to put labels on things" ... Putting labels on things is how people find the exit during a fire and make sure they're adding vanilla extract to the cake instead of arsenic.

ALANA MASSEY,
writer, on medium.com



ON SHARING

I DON'T KNOW WHY people are so keen to put the details of their private life in public; they forget that invisibility is a superpower.

BANKSY, street artist, in Time Out New York

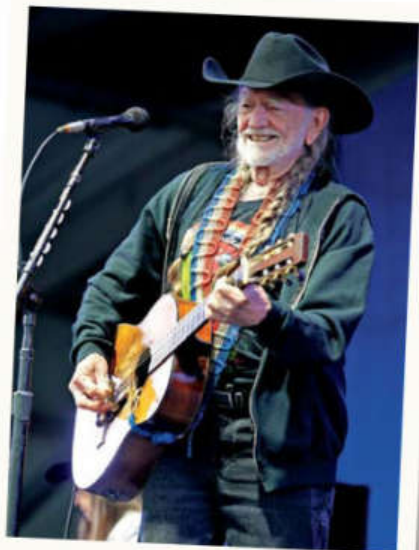
WHEN YOU PUT STUFF out there about yourself, people realise, Hey, this person admits he is flawed ... [my] being that way is going to be OK; I'm not going to be judged ... So, while it has, at times, worked against me, I think many, many times, it has worked for me.

JIM NORTON, comedian, on sweetphyllis.com

You sing the blues
to lose the blues.
You lift the burden
by transferring it
into a song. I'll be
damned if I know
why or how that
miracle takes place,
but it always does.

WILLIE NELSON,
musician,

in his memoir *It's a Long Story*



I BELIEVE that we're
here to be tested.
To have life lessons.
To enhance all the
qualities of compassion
and empathy and love.

To grow. The only other choice
is – if you can't grow, you're going to
shrivel. So there isn't a choice, really.
You seek to grow, no matter what
happens that may debilitate you for a
time. But it's in you to keep growing.
To keep rising up, and learning
something from it. And surging
forward.

ROSIE BATTY,
Australian of the Year 2015,
crusader against domestic violence
and mother of 11-year-old Luke,
who was murdered by his father

FOR READERS, what they read is
where they've been, and their
collections are evidence of the trek.

WILLIAM GIRALDI,
novelist, in the *New Republic*

CHILDHOOD, especially when
you're an only child, is like being
plunked down on an isolated human
outpost in deep space for the first
18 years of your life. Everything you
know of Earth and its customs you
hear from the humans charged with
your rearing or pick up by chance
from the TV.

ALEXANDRA PETRI,
newspaper columnist, in her book
A Field Guide to Awkward Silences

Chemical Reaction

A scientist blames himself for our suspicion of chemistry

BY MARK LORCH

FROM *BBC NEWS MAGAZINE*



I REALLY ENJOY my job. I'm a chemist in academia. I get to wallow in the fascinating world of research science and then pass on my passions to eager young minds. But I also get out of my ivory tower and into schools. And there I pull out all the stops – liquid nitrogen gets sloshed around in abundance, hydrogen balloons are ignited like mini *Hindenburgs*, and ethanol-fuelled rockets zip around the playgrounds. Chemistry is fun.

So why is it the bogeyman of the sciences? Why is everybody scared of chemicals?

The very word *chemical* is often used as a synonym for *toxin* or *poison*. We say something is “chock-full of chemicals” to imply it's artificial and bad for you. Meaningless slogans like “chemical-free” pop up on products in health food stores and billboards. And nobody seems to mind, least of all the Advertising Standards Authority. I know – I've complained to them, and they told me that consumers clearly understand that *chemical-free* really means “free of synthetic chemicals”.

I don't get the distinction. Why are synthetic chemicals worse than natural ones? Why is the synthetic food additive E300 bad, while the vitamin C in your freshly squeezed orange juice is good, even though they are the same thing?

Chemistry is fascinating because of the way it can be used to synthesise new stuff – it's like molecular Lego. The fact that everything is made from 100-odd building blocks is remarkable. Throw chemicals in a pot in the right way, and you can build the world around us. So why is chemistry the bad boy of the sciences? Why is there this chemophobia?

Biology doesn't get a bad rap – quite the opposite. Biology has amazing animals and plants, the Human Genome Project, and David Attenborough. It's natural and good.

What about physics? Well, physics is just pretty damn cool. It's got stars, lasers, and the most impressive machine ever built – the Large Hadron Collider – all fronted by Professor Brian Cox beautifully explaining the wonders of the universe. It doesn't get any cooler than that.

And then there's chemistry, which, by reputation, has pollution, toxins, and weapons so bad that they warrant a Nobel Peace Prize-winning organisation to control them. The closest thing we've got to a celebrity chemist comes from the drama *Breaking Bad*, in which Walter White, a chemistry teacher turned drug kingpin, uses his encyclopaedic chemistry knowledge to synthesise hard drugs, poison his enemies, and dissolve the bodies of his



MARK LORCH is a chemist and a senior lecturer at the University of Hull. He has written for *Scientific American*, the *Guardian*, and *Ars Technica*.

victims. He doesn't really do much to combat chemophobia.

To me, chemistry's bad reputation seems very odd. Consider the estimated 1300 deaths in Syria as the result of sarin gas. They were, of course, absolutely horrific. But why were they worse than the 200,000 deaths caused by conventional physical weapons?

And closer to home, what's the most likely cause of injury or illness? I'm willing to bet my house that if you've been laid up in bed lately, it's due to some biological bug, not any sort of chemical-related poisoning. And what do you take to ease the symptoms of that pounding headache? A chemical analgesic, of course.

It is true that chemicals can be dangerous. My horticultural grandfather taught me that. He had a small farm with a large brick outbuilding that housed his lab, the contents of which he had assembled over years of amateur experimentation with plants and soils. To a ten-year-old fledgling chemistry geek, it was an Aladdin's cave of strange instruments, bottles, and weird muddy mixtures.

If we were really good, my grandfather would get out his sodium metal, mysteriously sitting in its jar of oil (he'd acquired it sometime in the distant past when health and safety weren't quite what we know and love

now). Then he'd gingerly take it to a quiet corner of his plot and, with a long pair of forceps, carefully extract a lump of the soft, glistening metal before hurling it into a bucket of water. *FIZZZZZ, BANG!*

Maybe you had a chemistry teacher who was fond of that demonstration, but trust me, my grandfather did it bigger and better. He taught me that

chemicals can be dangerous, and if something dreadful had gone wrong in his makeshift lab, then no doubt the papers would have reported on the role of chemistry.

But what if Grandpa had been negligent with the upkeep of the railings around his balcony? What if he had fallen off, gravity accelerating him

at 9.8m per second, until he hit the hard ground below? Would anyone have described it as an awful physics accident? Why does chemistry's role in accidents get highlighted, and whose fault is it that people are so scared of chemicals?

Simple: mine.

It's my fault and my grandfather's. We are responsible for chemophobia. Why? Well, my grandfather's sodium demo certainly fuelled my enthusiasm for chemistry. But it didn't spark it – that happened somewhere else. And sparking an interest is what he should have done and what I should be doing.



Whose fault is it that people are so scared of chemicals? Simple: mine. It's my fault

Pouring fuel onto the flames of enthusiasm is easy, especially with chemistry. The theatre is easy too – the bangs, the flames, the explosions, the pops, the whizzes, the smoke, and the rockets are all fabulously entertaining. I love it, and I love the whoops and cries and applause from the audience.

But at the end of the day, what does the audience remember? Just those bangs and not a jot of chemistry. Explosive, flaming chemistry demos do nothing to show what chemistry can build and everything to highlight what it can destroy. And in the process, they blow out any flickering interest in chemistry and replace it with fear.

Instead of listening to the boys asking for more explosions, I should have paid attention to the girl at the back with her hands over her ears. I should have shown her how easy it is to do fascinating chemistry safely.

Soak a bit of red cabbage in water, and you have a powerful pH indicator that miraculously changes colour when you add vinegar. Or get some

sodium bicarbonate and mix it with some aluminium foil, and you can chemically clean your silver spoons.

Then I should have told the class about the fascinating stories tucked away in the history of chemistry, like Hungarian chemist George de Hevesy concealing his friends' solid-gold Nobel Prize medals from Nazis on the hunt for precious metals. He didn't want to risk burying them or hiding them somewhere, so he dissolved the medals in a mixture of hydrochloric and nitric acids, then he popped the bottles on the shelves of his laboratory, hiding them in plain sight. The Nazi troopers, hunting for loot, marched straight past them. In 1945, de Hevesy used another simple bit of chemistry to recover the gold. He returned the metal to the Nobel Prize committee, who had those medals recast and returned to their rightful owners.

Those are the demonstrations that fire imaginations and fuel a love of chemistry. Those are the stories that kill chemophobia. **R**

BBC NEWS MAGAZINE (NOVEMBER 26, 2013) © 2013 BY MARK LORCH. BBC.COM.



NOT MAVERICK

US Air Force call signs can be very honest, as the following show.

Boomer: accidentally broke the sound barrier over a small town

SMAT: Small Man Always Talking

SHOCK: Scarlet-Haired Ovulating Commie Killer (one of the unit's female pilots)

ZEUS: Zero Effort Unless Supervised QUORA.COM

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CHOLESTEROL

From striking new studies and leading specialists, the latest information

BY ANITA BARTHOLOMEW





n Friday morning, April 16, 2004, Mohamed Hadibèche, then a 44-year-old truck driver, felt a mild pain in his chest. It was gone within minutes. The following morning, the pain returned – again, subsiding soon after. So when the pain returned the next afternoon, he assumed he could ignore it.

But this time it rapidly grew more intense. “I felt I had a stake deep in my chest,” recalls Mohamed. His wife, Houria, insisted on getting him to hospital.

Mohamed couldn’t have known it that Sunday, but inside the walls of the arteries leading to his heart, cholesterol had been building up. Over time, this cholesterol had hardened into a substance called plaque, creating a condition called atherosclerosis. These plaques narrowed the space through which his blood flowed.

When plaques rupture, as they sometimes do, blood clots can form, further interfering with the flow of blood. This appears to be what happened to Mohamed. Blocked by hard, calcified cholesterol and clots, oxygen-rich blood could no longer reach his heart. And Mohamed Hadibèche suffered a heart attack.

What is cholesterol, and why do we have it?

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance called a lipid that’s primarily produced by the liver. We couldn’t live without it. “You need it for hormones, DNA, and cell membranes,” says Dr Ian Graham, professor of cardiovascular medicine at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

If not for cholesterol, your brain couldn’t function.

But cholesterol doesn’t swim through your blood vessels all by itself. When your doctor tells you about your cholesterol levels, she’s actually talking about the levels of several different types of particles that include cholesterol as just one component. These tiny particles are called lipoproteins, because their exteriors are made up of proteins, while the interior contains the lipid cholesterol and a second lipid called triglyceride. (Triglycerides make up most of the fat in your body.)

Your cholesterol test only measures the first two major lipoproteins. Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL), named for its lower concentration of cholesterol, is commonly labelled “bad” cholesterol because it contributes to plaque. High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) is the so-called “good” cholesterol because it is thought to help remove LDL cholesterol from the arteries. The third major lipoprotein is Very Low Density Lipoprotein (VLDL), a larger particle with a high concentration of triglycerides.



Foods high in refined sugar and starchy carbohydrates are bad for your cholesterol

These lipoprotein particles circulate through your bloodstream, dropping off molecules of cholesterol and other substances wherever they are required – and sometimes where they're not. Because, despite how important cholesterol is to your body's functioning, you can have too much of this good thing. "We have four times more than we need," says Professor Graham. "Nobody quite knows why."

But when that excess goes where it's least welcome – stuck to the walls of your arteries, as happened to Mohamed – it increases the risk of heart problems. If the arteries leading to the brain are involved, it can increase the risk of stroke.

Not all heart problems are related to high cholesterol, but the World Health Organization estimates that cholesterol is responsible for a third of coronary heart disease cases. That's significant, because cardiovascular disease is the number-one cause of death globally, accounting for more than 17.5 million deaths a year. Meanwhile, high triglycerides, fats that rise when "good" cholesterol levels fall, can double the risk of stroke, says a large 2012 study.

How lifestyle affects cholesterol levels

"All the lipids in [blood] plasma are determined by lifestyle and genetics," says Dr Børge G Nordestgaard of Copenhagen University Hospital. And while you can't change your genes, you can change your lifestyle.

After analysing results from six earlier studies, scientists determined that exercise can reduce cholesterol, but not as much as an improved diet. You'll reach healthier levels more surely by combining the two. And, if you've added kilos over the years, losing that weight is probably the most important lifestyle change you can make, says Dr Ronald Mensink,

professor of molecular nutrition at Maastricht University. “If body weight goes down, LDL goes down.” As a rule, so do triglycerides.

But weight loss is difficult for many if not most people, and maintaining weight loss can be even more so.

Which leaves eating healthier foods – effective, safe and infinitely more doable – as the best first step in getting cholesterol under control for the great majority of us.

But not everyone gets that message. Mohamed didn’t, despite more than a month in the hospital and a stint at a cardiac rehabilitation centre. Because his cholesterol levels were perilously high, his doctors prescribed a statin drug, Tavor [atorvastatin; also known as Lipitor], that inhibits an enzyme the liver uses to produce cholesterol. Statins are the most common drug treatment for people with high cholesterol. Nobody suggested Mohamed change his diet, however. And even if doctors had, back in 2004, he might have been given the wrong advice.

New information on diet and cholesterol levels

What you should eat to control cholesterol has long been a source of confusion. Recent research shows that, contrary to previous assumptions – and previous advice doled out to patients – the cholesterol you consume contributes only a trivial increase to the cholesterol in your bloodstream. It’s the excess cholesterol

your liver manufactures that causes problems. That excess is still related to the foods you eat, but not necessarily those foods doctors warned against in the past.

Scientists once believed that all dietary fats increased fats in the blood. Now they know that the main culprits are saturated and trans fats, especially in a diet that includes big helpings of red meat and, surprisingly enough, starchy, sugary and processed foods.

“We did studies expecting to see a benefit on cholesterol levels of [a low-fat diet], and lo and behold, we saw the opposite,” says Dr Ronald Krauss, director of atherosclerosis research at Children’s Hospital Oakland Research Institute, California. That’s because, when reducing the overall fat they eat, “most people will replace the calories with carbohydrates,” he says.

A diet that serves up lots of starchy and sugary carbohydrates – such as bread, potatoes, added sugar, and white rice – increases VLDL, LDL and triglycerides while it decreases the so-called good cholesterol, HDL. A large 12-year Danish study published in 2009 found that substituting starches and sugars for saturated fats in the diet increased the incidence of heart attacks.

Meanwhile, say numerous studies and experts from across the world, many unsaturated fats (those which are liquid at room temperature), especially those found in olive oil, fatty fish and nuts, actually help lower

WHAT IS “GOOD” CHOLESTEROL ?

HIGH DENSITY LIPOPROTEIN (HDL) has long been dubbed “good” cholesterol because when its levels are high, heart risks decrease. So scientists theorised it was actively scrubbing bad cholesterol off artery walls.

But when drugs were developed that increased HDL, they failed to lower the risk of heart disease. What was going on?

Professor Børge G Nordestgaard says that the so-called “good” cholesterol probably isn’t an active “bad” cholesterol scrubber, but more like a passive indicator.

Think of a road sign. The sign shows you where a road might curve, but doubling the number of signs won’t change the curve. The cholesterol “curve”, according to Professor Nordestgaard, is VLDL, a type of cholesterol that is downright ugly and can greatly increase heart health risks.

When “good” HDL cholesterol is high, ugly VLDL is low, and vice-versa.

So levels of “good” HDL do no more than tell you whether your VLDL is high or low. Increasing HDL won’t change your risk any more than adding more road signs will change the curve.

cholesterol levels. People are more likely to have lower cholesterol levels when they eat a diet rich in fresh vegetables, legumes, whole grains, fish and nuts. The Mediterranean diet is one such regimen, and a Dutch study published in 2010 found that it reduced both total and LDL cholesterol. Another study found that a diet high in plant fibre, soy and almonds decreased LDL cholesterol about as well as statins, the gold standard in cholesterol-lowering drugs.

When lifestyle changes aren’t enough

Outi Elovaara, a petite mother of six, didn’t seem like someone who would have high cholesterol. She maintained a healthy weight, ate well – preferring vegetables, whole grains, fat-free dairy, fish and lean meats – and she exercised regularly.

But in July 2012, at the age of 51, she suffered a stroke. “The blockage started from my heart and travelled to my brain,” she says. “My speech became slurred and one side of my face hung down.” It was all so sudden. “I kept thinking I would be paralysed and at the mercy of others for the rest of my life.”

But Outi was lucky. She regained her ability to speak in a couple of days, and her only lingering symptoms are difficulty writing by hand and a slight weakness in her left arm.

Still, her total cholesterol, at 6.8mmol/L, was more than double

what doctors now recommend for someone with a family history of heart disease. Her father died of a heart attack at the age of 41 and her sister at age 59. After her stroke, it was imperative that Outi reduce her cholesterol to safer levels.

She was given prescriptions for a statin to reduce cholesterol, as well as for Plavix (clopidogrel), to prevent blood clots.

CHOLESTEROL TARGETS TO AIM FOR

TARGETS FOR cholesterol levels can vary from country to country. General recommendations for total cholesterol levels are less than 5.5mmol/L. However, people concerned about their heart health should aim for:

Total cholesterol to be 5.0mmol/L or lower.

LDL cholesterol to be around 3.0mmol/L or lower

HDL level greater than 1mmol/L

Triglyceride level less than 1.7mmol/L

People at higher risk should aim for lower total and LDL targets, says Dr Gitt – and, he notes, those targets keep getting revised downward. “New studies came out showing that even lower levels of LDL cholesterol were of benefit,” says Dr Gitt. In high-risk patients, many experts now recommend they get their LDL below 1.8.

While statins are often sufficient to reduce LDL to healthier levels, some people need additional medications to reach their targets. So either a drug called ezetimibe (Zetia or Ezetrol), or Vytorin (a combination pill with both ezetimibe and a statin), might be prescribed.

According to German cardiologist and researcher Dr Anselm Gitt, a randomised trial of 18,000 high-risk patients, combining ezetimibe with statin treatment brought down LDL cholesterol levels an additional 10%, on average. “Ezetimibe has a totally different mechanism,” he says. Rather than inhibiting cholesterol production, ezetimibe works by reducing absorption of cholesterol. This one-two punch can often help people reach safe levels when statins, by themselves, fall short.

But what are your options when you need greater cholesterol reduction than you can get with diet alone – and you can’t tolerate statins? Outi Elovaara is among those who experienced severe side effects. “I tried to take the medication, but it was impossible due to joint and muscle pain,” says Outi.

Muscle problems are the most commonly recognised side effects of statins, says Dr Krauss but, he adds, other potential concerns are just now coming to light, including a somewhat higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes. The diabetes link is stronger among women, says Dr Krauss.

Given the life-saving potential of statins, it's often worth the small risk. But newer – and far more powerful – drugs are in the pipeline.

Promising new treatments coming soon

The answer for people like Outi, who are at high risk and who either can't get their cholesterol low enough solely with statins and diet, or who can't tolerate statins, might come in the form of a genetically engineered medication designed to help the liver eliminate LDL cholesterol. Several such drugs, called PCSK9 inhibitors, are in the final stages of clinical trials and results have been very promising. None yet are approved for sale, but Dr Gitt estimates that at least one will be by the end of this year or in early 2016. According to Dr Gitt: "If you [use] this drug, you will bring down the LDL by another 70 per cent."

TODAY, OUTI RELIES ON PLANT sterol and stanol food supplements

rather than prescription drugs to reduce her cholesterol. Plant sterols and stanols are waxy substances produced by plants that are similar to our own cholesterol, and have been shown to help lower cholesterol levels. As of her last check-up, her total cholesterol was 4.6 – better than when she suffered her stroke, but not yet where it should be.

Meanwhile, Mohamed started working with a nutritionist and learned that his lifestyle was adversely affecting his health. Based on her advice, he stopped smoking, cut down on sugar, salt and saturated fat, and started an exercise programme. "The impact on my blood analysis is unbelievable," says Mohamed. "Thanks to that change in my lifestyle my cholesterol level was so low that the doctor prescribed a lower dose of statins."

Which all goes to show that there are good solutions today, and perhaps even better ones tomorrow to help everyone keep cholesterol at healthy levels. **R**

CHECK INTO THE ROBOT-RUN HOTEL

The Henn-na Hotel in southwestern Japan, which roughly translates to Strange Hotel, is "manned" almost totally by robots to save labour costs. A female humanoid and a robotic dinosaur do the check-in while an automated trolley takes luggage up to the room. The hotel also uses facial recognition technology, instead of room keys. The reason? Robots aren't good at finding keys if people happen to lose them. *CHARLESTON-GAZETTE MAIL*

Life's Like That

SEEING THE FUNNY SIDE



From the Archives

The humour of the anecdote aside, it's interesting to note just how much readers were paid for a successful contribution to Life way back in October 1958:



My teenage daughter wanted to borrow 25 dollars to buy a dress. "I'll pay you back as soon as I get my cheque," she promised.

"What cheque?" I asked her.

"Oh," she replied airily, "I'm sending an item to The Reader's Digest. It's about the time we went to the Jacksons' and they were having a big fight. On the way home you said you were sure glad you and Daddy never fought over such silly things. And Dad said, oh, yes, you did. And you said, oh, no, you didn't. Then he reminded you about some fights you'd had and..."

"Stop!" I ordered.

I didn't lend her the money; I bought her "item" off her for 25 dollars.

SUBMITTED BY MRS LEONARD GUESS

TILL NEXT TIME

For serving as a flower girl for her aunt, three-year-old Sydney received a doll and bridal-themed gifts. Sydney was so thrilled, she ran to her aunt and



announced, "I want this for all your weddings!" **SUBMITTED BY HELEN THOEN**

How is it that our memory is good enough to retain the least triviality that happens to us, and yet not good enough to recollect how many times we've told it to the same person?

SUBMITTED BY DREW BYRNE

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES; THINKSTOCK

NAMES DROPPING

Upon hearing yet another name she couldn't pronounce, my friend said, "In my day, if people were trying to pick a name for their

child, they put

all their favourites in a kettle and picked one. Today, they just throw the kettle out the window and name the child whatever sound it makes when it lands."



SUBMITTED BY R.N.

WORD POWER

My six-year-old daughter was trying out new words, hoping to sound more adult.

"Actually," she said, "plants come from seeds."

"That's right," I agreed. "Actually. That's a big word. Do you want to know another one?"

"What?" she said, eyes lighting up.

"Therefore," I replied.

Barely skipping a beat, she put the new word to use.

"Papa," she said. "I'll always be therefore you!"

SUBMITTED BY PAUL HALLELUJAH



The Great Tweet-off: Relationship edition

The mysteries of love and the sanctity of marriage: two concepts that are given pretty short shrift on Twitter, if these examples are anything to judge by ...

I can't wait to get married and communicate my disdain solely through aggressive dishwashing.

@CHARSTARLENE

Relationships are mostly you apologising for saying something hilarious.

@BRIANGAAR

Marriage is basically listening to your husband swear and scream at scanners/printers from another room.

@KELLYOXFORD

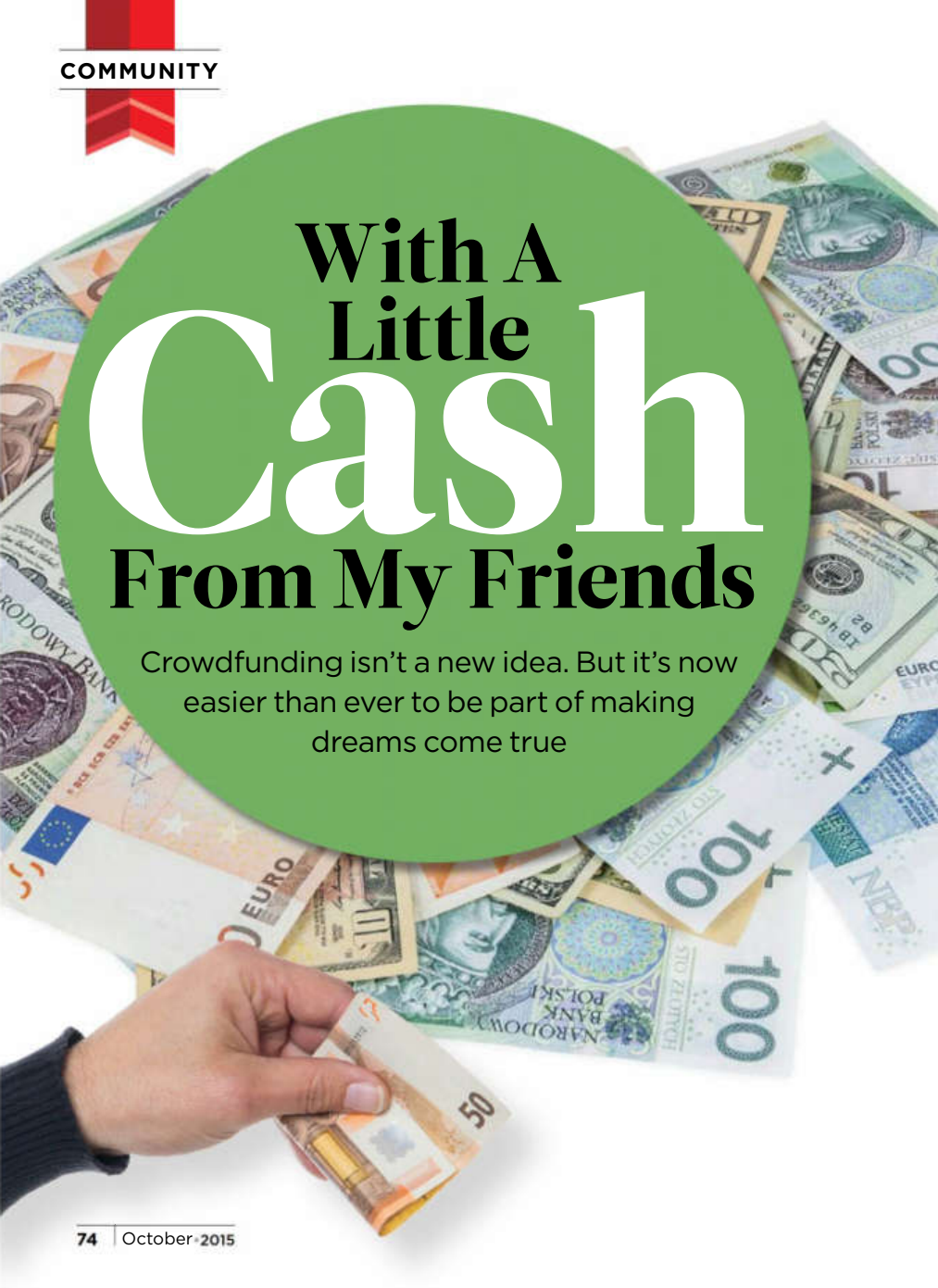
Whenever being single gets me down, I like to close my eyes, take a deep breath and then go do whatever I want pretty much nonstop.

@MIAHSAINT

Never go to bed angry if your partner hasn't cut their toenails in a while.

@SMETHANIE





With A Little Cash From My Friends

Crowdfunding isn't a new idea. But it's now easier than ever to be part of making dreams come true



BY HELEN O'NEILL

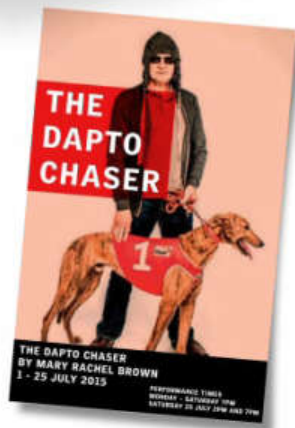
Earlier this year I succumbed to my first crowdfunding plea.

An actor friend told me about a role that he was hoping to get in a local play.

The Dapto Chaser was an Australian comedy about desperation and dog racing, and its producer Dino Dimitriadis wanted to match the funds he was raising from other sources to pay his actors a good upfront fee. Dimitriadis posted his plea for the community to help on Pozible, an Australia-based crowdfunding website.

I went online and discovered that for \$40 I could snap up a ticket to a preview, a supporters' pack including a fridge magnet, and Dimitriadis's "love and thanks". Given my intention to see the play anyway, it seemed churlish not to sign up. I pressed the link and donated to the cause.

Had Dimitriadis failed to reach his target, my money would have been returned. In fact he comfortably exceeded it. Not all campaigns run quite so smoothly.



In June, British man Thom Feeney made headlines worldwide with a campaign on website Indiegogo aimed at raising €1.6 billion to bail out Greece. In just over a week 108,654 contributors pledged €1.9 million. But that was well short of the target so the money stayed in pledgers' pockets. It was simply too big a target, Feeney conceded of his "all-or-nothing" approach, but then he launched a new crowdfunding initiative to generate a more modest €1m towards the country's humanitarian crisis.

In 14 days Feeney's second attempt netted €289,152 with the proviso this time that all cash raised would

Wikipedia defines crowdfunding as "the practice of funding a project or venture by raising monetary contributions from a large number of people, typically via the internet." Online, it's easy to reach a lot of people directly and very quickly, and so if you can make a pitch that grabs the right kind of attention, there's a fair chance people will open their wallets in exchange for various rewards such as the finished product or equity.

The Pebble Time smartwatch, which raised US\$20.3m in pre-orders earlier this year, and Exploding Kittens, a card game based on Russian Roulette, that pulled in US\$8.7m, are just two recent

IF YOU CAN MAKE A PITCH THAT GRABS THE RIGHT KIND OF ATTENTION, THERE'S A FAIR CHANCE PEOPLE WILL OPEN THEIR WALLETS

be invested to support people in need in Greece even if Feeney did not hit his target. "I realise now I should have done this on the first one," he said online. "I can only apologise."

Pebble Time, a smartwatch that syncs with Android or iPhone apps, raised US\$20.3m from ordinary people via crowdfunding platform Kickstarter



*The Statue of
Liberty's pedestal
was funded by
small donations*



PHOTOS: (PREVIOUS PAGE) THINKSTOCK; THIS PAGE (STATUE) GETTY IMAGES

stars of crowdfunding platforms.

In 2014, crowdfunding projects raised US\$16.2b worldwide, more than one-and-a-half times the previous year's total, according to a report from research and advisory firm Massolution. The prediction for 2015: a doubling of successful pledges to US\$34.4b.

Crowdfunding may feel like a new phenomenon – the noun only made its way into the Oxford English Dictionary this year – but the idea that “lots of littles make a lot” is as old as the proverbial hills.

Back in the early 1600s, the eccentric English poet John Taylor funded his endeavours by proposing books, appealing for funders, and only printing them when his subscription target allowed it. Other early examples include the 19th century cooperative movement where local groups banded together to open stores, for example, that they would never have been able to bankroll alone.

We also have a crowdfunding campaign to thank for New York's Statue of Liberty.

In the late 1800s, after the French people donated the enormous Liberty statue to New York, US Congress refused to bankroll construction of the pedestal, thus threatening the project's completion. Fearful that another American city would snatch the monument away, publisher Joseph Pulitzer launched an appeal to raise \$100,000 via a local newspaper.

Over 120,000 people responded, contributing an average of 83 cents each and the statue was erected. The rest, as they say, is history.

Today crowdfunding projects pepper the internet, with over 1200 sites specialising in everything from social causes to real estate. Earlier this year, a clever idea to simplify honey production changed the lives of an Australian father-and-son team, Stuart and Cedar Anderson. The pair turned to Indiegogo to seek funds to develop their revolutionary idea for a beehive with a built-in tap to

life crisis tattoos to critical medical expenses. Campaigns are often mobilised when calamity strikes.

In Australia, the small Gippsland town of Buchan turned to crowdfunding to rebuild its historic hotel after a fire destroyed it in 2014. And, in Germany, a car owner who totalled his Ferrari 458 Italia launched the “Dead Ferrari” campaign in an attempt to entice strangers to bankroll its €210,000 repair – an “opportunity” which provoked as much derision as praise.

Yet there are limits. Zack Danger Brown, an Ohio man who jokingly

EARLIER THIS YEAR A CLEVER IDEA TO SIMPLIFY HONEY PRODUCTION OVERSHOT ITS US\$70,000 TARGET BY 17,385%

extract the honey without disturbing the bees. The why-didn't-we-think-of-that-before concept caught public imagination worldwide and overshot its US\$70,000 target by a stunning 17,385%, netting the Andersons more than US\$12m from buyers and investors to fast-track commercial development of Flow Hive and start manufacturing the beehives.

With entrepreneurs and wishful thinkers trying to bring virtually every imaginable venture to life, supporters are subsidising everything from movies (*Veronica Mars* fans pledged more than \$5m to get a film adaptation of the TV show off the ground) and mid-

launched a Kickerstarter campaign in 2014 for US\$10 to make a potato salad, came away with US\$55,492 after 6911 people backed his crazy plan. Even so, Kickstarter refused to host his next campaign aimed at grinding a jet ski into powder so he could send it to his donors. Undeterred, he announced he would take the scheme to a rival site.

Crowdfunding is also now moving into areas once the territory of governments, banks and investment professionals.

In August 2014, a Sydney scientist, Ben McNeil, founded thinkable.org, a website linking researchers with people who want to fund innovation.



Fan-funded movie project Veronica Mars, based on a TV series starring Kristen Bell (above left), raised more than \$2m in ten hours. Below: crowdfunder Zack Danger Brown tucks into his US\$55,492 dish of potato salad

After 17 years of researching oceans and climate change in the US and Australia, McNeil believed there must be a better way to fund the more speculative ideas that traditional sources of funds often shied away from but which just might change the world.

In its first 11 months, Thinkable raised \$70,000 via prizes, competitions and direct public donations. "People are really fascinated with science," he says. "We're excited about connecting the world with the scientists themselves."

In Australia crowdfunding itself is facing a transformation. Federal government plans to change current



regulations so start-ups can offer shares via crowdfunding platforms, will bring it in line with places like the UK and New Zealand, and potentially release a vast stream of funding to innovative new businesses.

At the same time, investing in unproven, start-up businesses could leave many funders disappointed. In other words, buyer beware. US entrepreneurship specialist Cameron Kushman warns that when it comes to speculative ideas, “You might lose your shirt.” The most important thing to understand about crowdfunding, he wrote on *forbes.com*, “is that it is very risky, and you could, very easily, lose your entire investment.”

As crowdfunding has spread, so has its dark side. Criminals have attempted to use some platforms for money laundering and in June the US’s Federal Trade Commission targeted organisers of a crowdfunding campaign for the first time after a proposed board game, raised US\$122,874 and failed to deliver.

A company that has been cited as a classic example of the risks is Kreyos, which raised over \$1.5 million in 2013 to fund the production of a waterproof smartwatch with voice and gesture control. A year later, a few customers received a watch – which was nothing like the prototypes. But many others didn’t receive a single thing. Kreyos closed down at the end of last year.

But despite the risks, according to

crowdfunding and digital strategist Anna Maguire, author of *Crowdfund It!:* “It is going to grow, grow, grow.”

In the last few years it has gone from being an oddity to a fully recognised form of funding, she says. “Like all booms there will be a correction. [But] it’s not a novelty, it’s not a gimmick and it’s not going away.”

When the night finally arrived to see *The Dapto Chaser*, my ticket was waiting for me at the theatre door. My name was printed boldly on the play’s programme along with another 91 crowdfunding supporters, and I could sense a rather special buzz in the air.

The play itself lived up to its hype. It proved to be fast, funny and poignant, and there was something special, in that warm fuzzy way, about knowing I had helped directly to make it happen. As the audience left the theatre, Dino Dimitriadis and the playwright personally thanked us for the support.

Crowdfunding may be a gamble but pick your project carefully and its bonuses can go far beyond the monetary. What my dalliance with it showed me was that, like the best things in life, it’s personal – and that makes potential rewards all the greater. Learning that felt like \$40 well spent. **R**

SWISS ARMY MOO-VES OUT

During a heatwave in July this year, Swiss Army helicopters were called in to scoop water out of lakes and fly it up to pastures to keep cows cool and supplied with drinking water. **AP**

Quotable Quotes



**IF YOU CHASE
TWO RABBITS,
YOU WILL LOSE
THEM BOTH.**

NATIVE
AMERICAN
PROVERB

**Discipline is doing the
same thing the right
way whether anyone's
watching or not.**

MICHAEL J. FOX



Most people do not
listen with the intent to
understand; they listen with
the intent to reply.

STEPHEN R. COVEY,
author

**YOU WILL NEVER BE
COMPLETELY FREE FROM
RISK IF YOU ARE FREE.**

EDWARD SNOWDEN, *privacy advocate*



***Being a nerd just means there
is something in the world that you
care deeply about.***

OLIVIA MUNN, *actress*

**EVERYBODY WANTS
TO SAVE THE EARTH;
NOBODY WANTS
TO HELP MUM
DO THE DISHES.**

P. J. O'ROURKE



History is merely a
list of surprises.

It can only
prepare us to
be surprised
yet again.

KURT VONNEGUT

***Dream, dream, dream.
Dream transforms into thoughts.
And thoughts result in action.***

DR "A.P.J." ABDUL KALAM, *scientist and former Indian president*



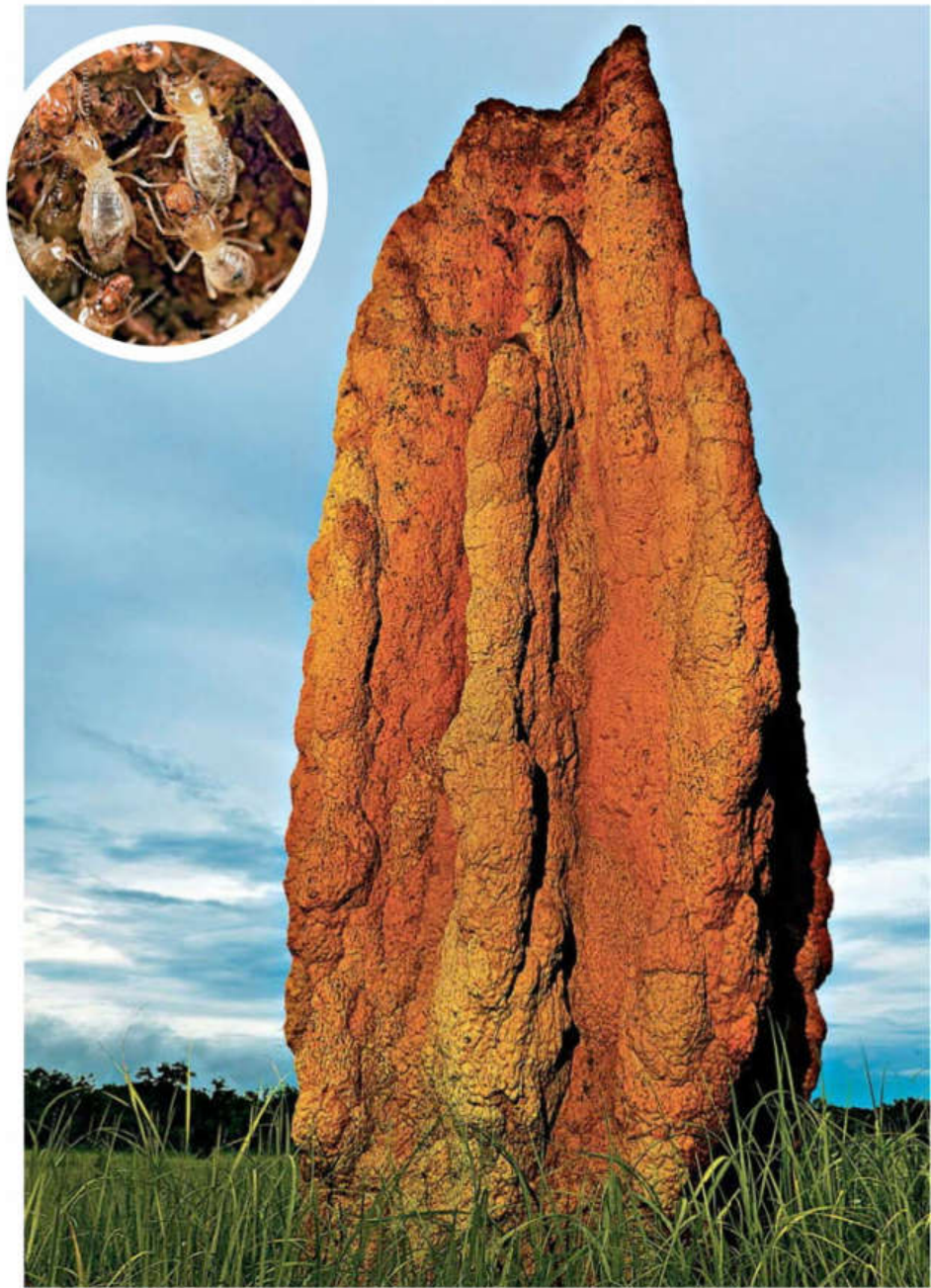
In his book *Animal Architecture*, award-winning nature photographer Ingo Arndt captures gorgeous – and functional – nests, shelters and habitats



Grand Designs

BY CORNELIA KUMFERT

◀ **THE MALE BAYA WEAVER** has his work cut out if he wants to woo a mate. To stand any chance of starting a family, the dainty little tropical bird first needs to construct a beautiful home. Using its strong beak and claws, the male loops, knots and weaves a nest out of hundreds of strips of grass or palm fronds. The resulting miniature work of art – which boasts an egg chamber, antechamber and entrance tube – needs to withstand tropical storms. The female inspects the nests midway, and she accepts the male's advances only if she is satisfied with the construction and its location. Female baya weavers are extremely safety-conscious and expect their new home to hang from a strong branch that is high off the ground to stay out of reach of predators.





↑ **ONE OF THE SMALLEST MAMMALS** in the world, harvest mice weigh from 4-11g. Using their agile hands and prehensile tails, these tiny creatures have no trouble climbing up even slender corn stalks in order to build their cosy, spherical nests. The females build their summer-residence-on-stilts at heights of up to a metre in the middle of grain fields so that they and their young never have to go too far to find their next meal.

◀ **STANDING LIKE MAGNIFICENT GOTHIC CATHEDRALS** in the arid Northern Australian bush, these mounds are built by spinifex termites and reach 6m or more. The mounds are a genuinely amazing feat of architecture made possible by a very special building material. Once dry, the mixture of termite saliva, soil and dung becomes as hard as cement. At the same time, it contains microscopic pores which, coupled with the mound's chimney-like shape, create a natural air-conditioning system. This ensures a constant flow of fresh air and maintains the temperature inside the mound at around 30°C.



↑ **HE'S NOTHING SPECIAL** to look at and he doesn't perform any amazing dances. So the Vogelkop bowerbird of New Guinea has had to develop his own unique strategy for winning over the ladies. About the size of a thrush, he bedazzles prospective partners by spending much of the year building his own bower and then proceeding to decorate it with impeccable taste. Flowers, leaves, fruits and even old plastic bags are all pressed into service as adornments. The name of the game is to attract a female and get her to stay - at least for one night.

IN WEAVER ANT COMMUNITIES, their own larvae are used as sewing tools → to build nests. Working in unison, these long-legged insects stick several individual leaves together using silk thread. However, the silk can only be extruded from the salivary glands of ant larvae about to enter the pupal stage. The workers manoeuvre the larvae back and forth like a weaver's shuttle until the leaves have been securely joined. The workers then selflessly devote themselves to caring for the young to make amends for them having donated their silk to the colony.



It's as clear as mud when it comes to some popular sayings, says RD chief subeditor **Donyale Harrison**

Say What?

ENGLISH LIKES TO PRETEND it's a globalised language, which is sort of true when it comes to phrases like "Where is the toilet?" and "Is my plane on time?" But when it comes to idioms, even native speakers can come a cropper*.

It's fine to be confused when you first hear brilliant local expressions like the Kiwi box of budgies**, but there are a great many sayings in common usage across the Anglo-sphere that still trip us up.

You Say Tomato...

In many cases, it's because we don't see the saying written down, we just hear it being used. Mispronunciations are easy – *If you think that, you've got another think coming*, meaning you should think again, becomes *you've got another thing coming*, which doesn't make a lot of sense.

* **Come a cropper**: originally fall headlong from a horse, now to fail.

** **Box of budgies**: cheerful and happy.



The same problem sees *waiting with bated breath* (holding your breath in suspense) turn into *baited breath* (having breath that smells of fish), *just deserts* (what you deserve) become *just desserts* (what many of us would love), and *nip it in the bud* (stop it before it develops) become a cheeky nip in the *butt*.

In other cases, we pronounce the words wrongly because the original has fallen out of use and we substitute something familiar that sounds similar. *Be on tenterhooks* is an obvious saying about suspense if you know that tenterhooks were hooks used to stretch woollen cloth over frames called tenters as the cloth dried. But if you don't, "tenderhooks" is a reasonable guess.

A *damp squib* was a small explosive that wouldn't fire, which is how the phrase came to mean a disappointing person. A *damp squid* is commonly said instead. Leaving aside the fact that a damp squid is better than a dry one for everything except cooking, the Harry Potter series is helping to restore the original saying with its Squibs: non-magical children of magical parents.

Hold Your Horses

It's not surprising that equestrian sayings are so common: until recent decades most people lived horse-drawn lives. But within a century the car has become dominant, which leads to a lot of confusion when it comes to horse-related sayings.

Champing at the bit means eager to be off and comes from a horse champing or making a noisy biting noise against its bit, which it usually does out of impatience. But, like tenterhooks, the word has fallen out of favour, so *chomping* at the bit has become commonplace.

Rein-based idioms have their own problems. You'll often see *free rein* as *free reign*, with people thinking it refers to ruling, but it comes from a rider letting a horse choose its own direction. It's the same family of sayings as *rein it in* and *on a loose rein*.

And while *on his high horse* doesn't suffer from the wrong words, its meaning has shifted. A high or great horse was the horse of a leader in mounted combat and the phrase originally meant one in command, but over years has come to mean someone snobbish or superior.

Breaking Bard

Confusion isn't limited to common idioms, quotes get the muddle treatment, too, particularly Shakespeare's.

H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) has one character ordering another to "Lead on, MacDuff," and in the more than a century since, the line has been often repeated. In *Macbeth*, the line is "Lay on, MacDuff," a challenge to fight, not to show the way.

To the manor born is a bastardised version of *Hamlet's* "but to my mind, though I am native here and to the

manner born, it is a custom more honour'd in the breach than the observance." The original meant "have grown up with the custom", so the phrase's change in meaning to "have grown up with privilege" works better with "manor". However, the second part of the quote is often misused to mean a custom rarely followed. In fact, it means a custom it would be more honourable to ignore, such as drinking to excess, or stuffing ferrets down your trousers.

And then there is *in one fell swoop*, also from *Macbeth*. The Middle English word *fell* meant fierce, savage, cruel, and so it was a vicious swoop such as a bird of prey might make. It's a much grimmer phrase than the common error *one foul swoop*. Though my grandfather was rightly proud of himself when one of the roosters leapt onto a hen from the top of the shed and he was able to declare it "one fowl swoop".

Word on the Street

So should we be fussed when people get sayings wrong? I think the only reasonable answer is "sometimes". When a mistake takes a sensible saying and makes it illogical, it's worth correcting. But others, like to the manor born, show the phrase evolving in our ever-changing language and are more to be celebrated than censured.

This evolution goes on all the time. *Dull as ditchwater* has become *dull as dishwater* now most of us live miles

YOU DON'T SAY

Some common sayings really do need an explanation.

Pleased as Punch: as happy as Mr Punch, the evil puppet who goes on a drunken murder spree.

Get off scot free: from Old English "scotfree", exempt from royal tax.

Show your true colours: naval ships would fly many flags (colours) in a bid to obscure their identities when under sail. But the British Articles of War declared that vessels must show their "true colours" before going into battle.

Worth their salt: from the Latin word *salarium*, which is derived from *sal/salt* and gave rise to the word salary.

from ditches, but it still works. In the same way, we have a hoard of sayings that are likely to be lost, or undergo shifts in meaning over the next few decades. How does *like a broken record* work for people who were born after CDs or MP3s?

Just as old Pony Club types have spent years saying, "actually, it's champing..." those of us born before 1980 will one day find ourselves gently explaining, "No, it's *record*. You see, music once came on these fragile pressed-vinyl discs ..." **R**



All in a Day's Work

HUMOUR ON THE JOB



HOW TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION AT YOUR NEXT MEETING

Translate percentages into

fractions: If someone says, “25% of people clicked on this button,” quickly chime in with, “So about one in four,” and make a note. Everyone will nod in agreement, secretly impressed.

Ask the presenter to go back a

slide: Do this at any point in the presentation and you'll look like you're paying closer attention than anyone else.

Nod continuously while pretending to take notes: Always bring

a notepad with you. Take notes by writing down one word from every sentence you hear. Nod continuously while doing do.

Encourage everyone to “take a step back”:

There comes a point in most meetings when everyone is chiming in, except you. This is a great point to say, “Guys, guys, can we take a step back here?” Followed by a quick, “What problem are we trying to solve?” You've just bought yourself another hour of looking clever.

Source: sadanduseless.com



THE DEVIL YOU KNOW

When the coffeemaker went on the fritz, I joked that maybe it was the fault of the cockroaches. Our office manager was not amused.

“We don't have cockroaches,” she said, putting me straight.

“What about all the roach traps?” I asked, pointing to one.

“A lot you know – those aren't roach traps,” she sniffed.

“They're mousetraps.”

SUBMITTED BY A.S.

HOW DO I LOOK?

My mother moved towns and went for her first visit to her new doctor's surgery. The doctor looked through her extensive medical paperwork containing her health history and then looked at my mother.

“I'm pleased to say,” he told her, “with utmost certainty, that you look a whole lot better in person than you do on paper.”

SUBMITTED BY STEPHAN BYRN





SHOCKING DISPLAY

My friend, who's a nurse in an emergency department, was telling me about a patient who arrived with a gash in his head. Apparently the man was a farmer, and he and his son were working in a field when he'd felt a stone in his boot. He's tried to shake his foot to work the stone out but – finding it difficult to keep his balance – he decided to hold onto a fence pole.

The son, looking up from what he was doing, noticed his father standing on one leg shaking vigorously and thought he was holding onto the electrified fence.

Grasping a large stick, the son whacked his dad to break his hold on the fence, causing the injury to his head.

Stitches were required to mend the wound, although I'm not sure if the father and son's relationship is mended yet.

SUBMITTED BY WESLEY LEWIS

NOT HERE RIGHT NOW

Planning on being away from your desk for a while? Borrow one of these tried-and-true out-of-office messages:

- "I am currently out at a job interview and will reply to you if I fail to get the job."
- "Hi. I'm thinking about what you've just sent me. Please wait by your PC for my response."
- "I'm not in the office right now, but if it's important, tweet me using #YOUAREINTERRUPTINGMYVACATION."

Source: hubspot.com

BOOK HIM

When I returned a recipe book to my local library, the librarian noticed there was water damage to the book and asked me to pay for it. I agreed, but as I wasn't carrying any money, I said that I would pay next time I was in.



There was a different librarian on duty the next day when I dropped by with the money. She swiped my library card and my account came up on the computer screen.

In the "notes" section, it read: "Customer says he'll hand in the \$20 next time, but I don't think he will."

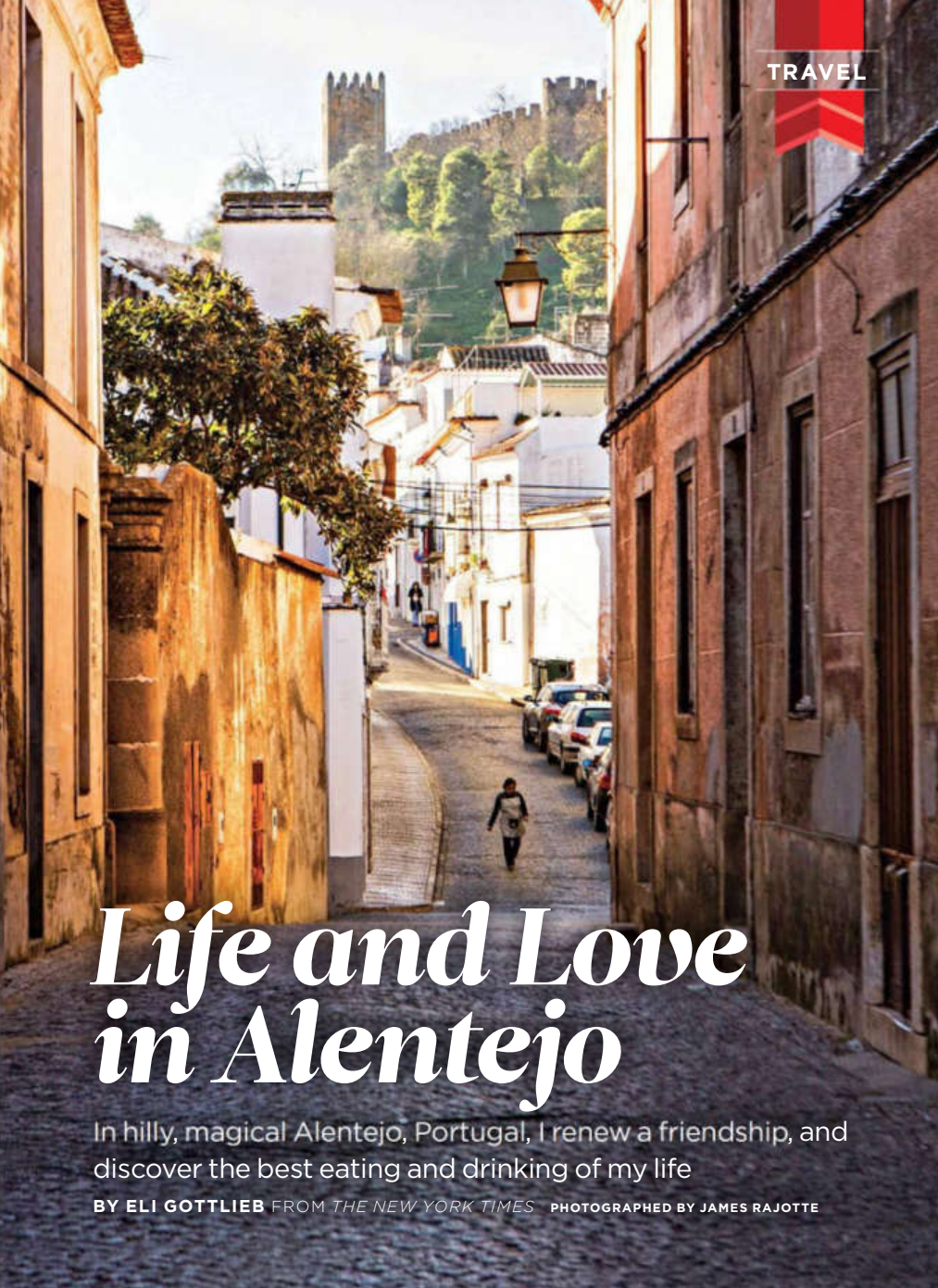
SUBMITTED BY NEIL HARRISON

👉 Got a good joke, anecdote or real-life gem to share? Send it in and you could win cash! See page 6 for details.



*Opposite: The town of
Montemor-o-Novo. This
page: wines of the Alentejo*





TRAVEL

Life and Love in Alentejo

In hilly, magical Alentejo, Portugal, I renew a friendship, and discover the best eating and drinking of my life

BY ELI GOTTLIEB FROM *THE NEW YORK TIMES* PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAMES RAJOTTE

THE SURPRISING thing about touching down at Lisbon airport is how fast, heading south in a car, you find yourself transported into deep countryside. I arrived on a mild October morning, was met there by my old friend Martin Earl, and within a few minutes was crossing the Vasco da Gama Bridge, longest in Europe, that stretches across more than 17km of the Tagus River estuary. Immediately thereafter we swerved off the highway and decelerated into the dreaming, older world of the Alentejo (the word literally means “beyond the Tejo” or Tagus).

For the next five days we’d travel among medieval whitewashed villages, rolling hills, mountain forts and a constellation of sparklingly modern vineyards. Long a destination for budget travellers, the Alentejo is rapidly becoming one of the world’s top wine destinations.

I was there to sample the landscapes and hospitality with my friend, who would also be my guide. Martin and I were part of a group of five guys, now middle-aged, who’d met in university and been star-struck by the dream of literature. Somewhat differently from the rest of us, Martin, a poet, had “gone native,” settling down with a local girl in Portugal and crossing into a life lived entirely – and permanently – in another language. I was eager to understand a little bit more what three decades of voluntary exile does to a person.

By now, 40 minutes from the airport, we were passing through sun-dappled



alleys of plane trees with, beyond them, irregular row upon row of cork oaks. “I sometimes call this area Corktugal,” Martin said with a laugh. The cork oak is hand-harvested of its bark once every ten years. The forests themselves are a giant cash cow – 60% of the global cork trade originates in Portugal.

WE STOPPED FOR A COFFEE in a sleepy, sun-blasted village called Montemor-o-Novo. There seemed to be a single café. But was it a café? The sign above it read: *Grupo de Pesca Desportiva à Linha de Montemor-o-Novo*. This was a local hand-line fishing club, Martin explained, devoted to the old, pure form of the sport in which the line is held in the hands, dropped to the bottom and jiggled in emulation



Above: cork oaks, which resemble stouter, leafier olive trees. Portugal is responsible for 60% of the global cork trade. Right: patrons of a local hand-line fishing club, in Montemor-o-Novo



and about to be feted.

We watched as a waiter presented the singer – distinguishable from the other patrons only by his dyed blond hair – with a tray bearing a white cube, roughly the size of a small brick.

“Lard,” Martin said simply. In Rome I had often seen ribbons of the stuff consumed like a kind of bacon sushi, but this was a block of pure porky fat and I watched amazed as the singer tucked a napkin into his collar and began forking pieces into his mouth

of live bait. The cheerful potbellied locals seated outside waved us in.

An excited barista explained that they were about to celebrate something extraordinary. The traditional Cante Alentejano, a polyphonic singing unique to the region, had just been designated by UNESCO an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Better yet, one of the singers was right there

with a great smacking of the lips.

We drank some of the deliciously bitter coffee and continued on our way. The route lay southeast, in the direction of Spain, and we took secondary roads, the better to savour our surroundings. With the windows open, the Fiat buzzed like a blender. Roadside eucalyptus trees sent a delicious tang through the October air.

MARTIN AND I CAUGHT UP while the tilled brown fields rose and fell outside the windows. Often we were stuck behind contraptions that resembled riding lawnmowers fitted with rudimentary car bodies. These slow, sputtering vehicles are known as *mata-velhos* – old person killers – because their tiny 50-cubic-centimetre engines don't require a driver's licence to operate and because they are often driven – and crashed – by the elderly.

We turned off for lunch in a smallish town called Redondo and found a promising-looking place, Porfírio's, with whitewashed walls and beamed ceilings. A tray of tasty appetisers, or *entradas*, was soon placed on our table: herbed and vinegared olives, breads, sausages and two kinds of fresh cheese. The lunch itself opened with an exquisite dogfish soup – the dogfish is a kind of shark, white-fleshed and sweet – followed by *arroz de pato*, or duck rice.

Portuguese cooking works through a process of concentration of essential tastes bolstered by fresh ingredients. *Arroz de pato* is a classic example of this magnification-through-reduction. The lid of baked egg atop the rice was dotted with broiled bits of incredibly savoury bacon and *chouriço*, a sausage similar to chorizo, both of them sourced from local pigs. Plunging your fork through the lid released a jet of flavourful steam, and below the rice, a vein of moist, darkly delicious duck.

But a last word about that pig. The animal reigns at the top of the food chain on Alentejo menus, consumed in nearly all its parts. The local specialty is *porco preto*, or black pig, fed mostly on the acorns that fall from cork trees and presented in sausage, bacon and chops and as an enriching agent in a variety of stews.

The animal's intense depth of flavour is due partly to that acorn-heavy diet and, as a bonus, those acorns imbue the flesh with oleic acid, the same heart-friendly ingredient found in olive oil.

The next two days would take on an easy natural rhythm of eating, sight-seeing and drinking the cheap, well-structured local wines. We stayed in the mountain towns Monsaraz and Marvão. Each was originally built as a fortified redoubt against invasion from nearby Spain and was visible from the valleys below looking like a kind of terracotta headpiece. Each was entered through several kilometres of switchbacks and inside the thickly fortified walls had an array of steep cobbled streets, a castle, a museum, shops, restaurants and panoramic views.

But it was in these showcase mountain towns, alas, that I felt the weight of the tourist trade wearing away some of the indigenous sparkle. The restaurants tended toward the tired, and the little ateliers and stores that honeycombed the alleyways seemed filled mainly with kitsch.



Mariana Perdígão, owner of Porfírio's, and her husband, Eliseu, in Redondo. Right: an appetiser of sliced ham, cheese, olives and chouriço

AFTER TWO DAYS we returned to the plains and began following signs for *rota dos vinhos*, or wine route. These soon brought us to the Adega Mayor winery, a hypermodern collection of cubes and cantilevers set out in the hills and designed by the famous Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza. We toured the ingeniously constructed building and sampled exquisite wines.

But it would be at lunch the next day that Portugal would finally offer up a truly world-class dining and drinking experience. It would take place at the

Herdade dos Grous, a giant vineyard and estate in a village south of Beja, a town boasting a hotel and a restaurant whose services we sampled.

In the high-ceilinged dining room, with views over the vineyards and a man-made lake, we ordered the chef's tasting menu accompanied by paired wines. The meal opened with a luxe version of typical entradas, the flavour of each small meat, cheese and vegetable dish as particularised as the panes of a stained-glass window. A lighter-than-air dogfish soup was followed by



The Alentejo's local specialty is porco preto, or black pig, which mostly feeds on the acorns that fall from the cork trees

a veal medallion set in two swooshes of mustard sauce, served with fingerling potatoes, a topping of radish sprouts and roasted chickpeas.

The paired wines of Herdade dos Grous began with a delicate palate-cleansing white and accompanied the meal along an arc of increasing depth and complexity that ended with the cymbal crash of a 2011 Grous Reserva red. The net effect of this was one of great culinary transport.

Afterward, I talked with Luís Duarte, the man responsible for the extraordinary wines I'd just drunk and the only one of Portugal's vigneron to have been named winemaker of the year twice. "I belong to the first class that studied winemaking in school, professionally," he said. "Instead of working in the Douro" – Portugal's traditional wine region, farther north – "I decided to head south to the un-

sung Alentejo. It was my good luck to get in on the ground floor of the worldwide growth of wine and ride that wave."

When asked the difference between Portuguese wine and that of other nations, Mr. Duarte didn't hesitate. "The wines of Chile and Argentina are too sweet," he said. "You think Spain, you think the tempranillo grape. Well, we don't use the same grapes everyone else does. We have 315 different grape varieties, many of them unique to us." With a wave of the hand, he indicated the glasses on our table. "You want a velvety and well-balanced wine at a good price? Think Portugal."

AFTER LUNCH, we strolled in the nearby vineyards. It was late afternoon, the sun low in the sky. The air was filled with nostalgic aromas of earth and mown grass, and I found myself

remembering my own near-exile in Italy, where I'd spent a total of eight years. Different from the Alentejo, Italy is long accustomed to being a sight-seeing shrine of sorts, and its tourist treasures often have a kind of annealed feeling to them, as of having been visited so often that they've been buffed smooth by the experience.

But Portugal, and particularly the Alentejo, give an entirely different impression: that of a place – showcase mountain towns apart – still waking up to its own worldly importance and, as a result, still vivid and sparklingly fresh.

We were almost returned to the main building when we saw a golden retriever amble out to greet us. The dog was approached by a barnyard cat. Instead of fighting, the two touched noses. "Around here," Martin commented, "everyone's so happy that even interspecies enemies kiss and make up." We laughed and turned

back towards the car.

Back in the airport in Lisbon, I hugged my old friend goodbye. I was relieved to have found him at peace in his adopted country. There's an essential melancholy in exile, a sadness from the severed connections to family, habit and what the poet Paul Celan called the "fatal once-only" of the mother tongue that can weigh on those who've made the move.

In Martin's case these deficits were offset by a good marriage, his devotion to his art and a country whose ancient ways allowed him the kind of concentration that speeding New York would have almost certainly denied.

In the process, coincidentally, that country had offered me two things: a reassuring insight into the adaptability of human nature over time, and a tour of the hilly, magical Alentejo, with some of the very best eating and drinking of my life. **R**

NEW YORK TIMES (JANUARY 16, 2015). © 2015 BY THE NEW YORK TIMES



WEIRD WORLD RECORDS

A Mexico City man is in Hogwarts heaven after his collection of "Harry Potter" memorabilia was named the world's largest. Menahem Asher Silva Vargas has spent nearly 15 years hoarding all things related to British author J.K. Rowling's young-adult wizard-fantasy series, which spawned eight blockbuster films. His collection includes magic wands, toy figurines, Gryffindor scarves and replica Quidditch brooms. Guinness World Records has officially recognised it as the world No. 1 at 3097 pieces.

ASSOCIATED PRESS



13 Things You Should Know About Negotiating

BY LARA ZARUM

1 Learn to improvise. Pay close attention to what your negotiating partner is expressing and be willing to step outside your comfort zone.

2 If someone offers a good deal, be sure it's worth the risk to ask for more. As Harvard Business School professor Michael Wheeler writes in 2013's *The Art of Negotiation*, "When someone hands you a tasty piece of cake, with rich frosting to boot, think twice about asking for sprinkles on top."

3 Jot down what you want beforehand. Written plans help you focus on achieving your goals, instead of getting flustered, says Marty Latz, founder of the training and consulting firm Latz Negotiation Institute.

4 Know your triggers. Gail Levitt, a facilitator at York University's Schulich School of Business in Toronto, says understanding what affects you emotionally makes it easier to avoid taking things



personally and concentrate instead on solving the conflict.

5 Be a copycat. A 2007 study of the effects of mimicry on negotiation found that ten out of 15 buyers who subtly copied their partners' mannerisms during the process achieved a deal. Only two out of 16 buyers who didn't mirror succeeded.

6 When negotiating for money – selling your car or asking for a raise, for example – ask for a range, not a fixed number. This approach may make it harder for your partner to counter with a lower sum.

7 Small talk goes a long way. Researchers from Stanford, Columbia and Northwestern universities followed people participating in email-based negotiations. One group went straight to business; members of the second began by telling their partners about themselves. Chatty negotiators reached an agreement 59% of the time, while business-centred participants succeeded only 39% of the time.

8 Demonstrate potential rather than listing accomplishments. A 2012 US study measured how participants felt about a hypothetical job candidate. Respondents felt a

person who lacked experience but had potential would be more successful than one with experience but fewer prospects for improvement.

9 Beware the gender disparity. According to Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever, authors of *Women Don't Ask*, 20% of women admit they don't negotiate at all – and those who do negotiate ask for 30% less than men on average.

10 Don't fall prey to “negotiation myopia”, a strategic mistake in which one party fails to see a solution that's mutually beneficial. Look for a resolution with which both sides can be happy.

11 Update your boss regularly on your accomplishments. If you save them all for one session, you're in danger of coming across as needy.

12 Have a fallback position. “If you've got a great Plan B, you'll have a more powerful negotiation,” Latz says. “The easier it is to walk, the more likely you are to achieve your goals.”

13 Be soft on the person and hard on the problem. Levitt says, “Ask yourself, ‘What do I want the other party to say or do at the end of the conversation?’ If the answer is, ‘Change into somebody else,’ that's not an appropriate outcome.” **R**

BEHIND THE NEWS



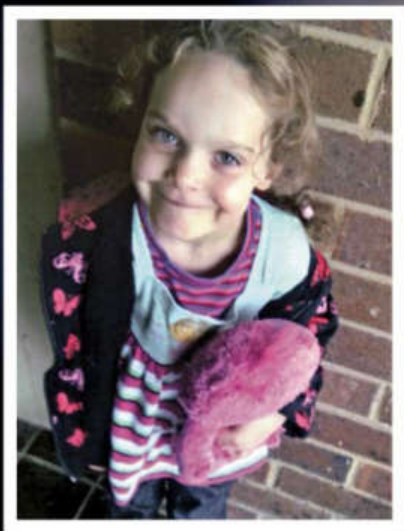
A cheeky grin. And curly locks. She was the little girl whose disappearance shocked a community. But for two homicide detectives, it was a stubborn case they were determined to solve

BY SIMON BOUDA

The Hunt to Find Kiesha

PHOTOS: (POLICEMAN) NEWSPIX; (KIESHA) FAIRFAX PHOTOS

Kiesha Weippeart became a familiar face in Australian newspapers and on television after she was reported missing by her mother, Kristi Abrahams, and Robert Smith on August 1, 2010



THE ALARM was raised at precisely 10.03am on Sunday, August 1, 2010.

“Hi, I, I’ve just gotten up ...” the emotional woman told the emergency switchboard operator, “... and noticed that my front door was open and my daughter’s not here.” The woman continued, sobbing, “... She’s six ... She’s in her pyjamas ... She’s got blonde hair and blue eyes.”

As the operator dispatched police to the home, an apartment in Mount Druitt, on Sydney’s far western outskirts, she gleaned further details: the little girl’s name was Kiesha Weippeart. The mother, Kristi Abrahams, shared the apartment with her partner, Robert Smith. She told police how they’d put the little girl to bed in her own room at around 9.30 the

helicopter scanned ponds and waterways, while teams with police dogs worked their way through backyards and streets for the tiniest clue. Community and media interest was intense.

On Monday morning they were still searching when Detective Inspector Russell Oxford, driving into work, caught a radio news report about Kiesha’s disappearance. The circumstances mentioned in the bulletin seemed odd to Oxford, who was one of the most senior homicide investigators in the New South Wales Police Force.

At the homicide squad offices Oxford briefed the squad commander and within the hour Oxford and Detective Sergeant Andrew Marks were on their way to Mount Druitt

THE WOMAN CONTINUED, SOBBING, “... SHE’S SIX ... SHE’S IN HER PYJAMAS ...SHE’S GOT BLONDE HAIR AND BLUE EYES.”

previous evening. She described how they’d awoken around 12 hours later to discover the bedroom empty.

It was as if she’d simply vanished into the night.

Kiesha’s disappearance sparked a massive search of the neighbourhood. By late afternoon more than a hundred police officers and State Emergency Services volunteers were searching bushland, parkland and stormwater drains. Police in a

Police Station. A taskforce was formed to investigate the case.

The detectives – both regarded as quiet achievers within the squad – started by combing through the available details. Abrahams’s and Smith’s accounts matched, but the evidence seemed at odds with their story. Uniformed officers who first attended the apartment had noted the neatness of the little girl’s bed: the covers had been folded back and the pillow had



been puffed out. It didn't appear to have been slept in or had been remade before the first police officers arrived.

The front door was a heavy fire door, which Abrahams had told police was ajar when she woke up. That didn't seem right: it was the type of door that closes automatically. The two detectives couldn't see any evidence of a forced entry but the door handle and deadlock seemed faulty. The detectives themselves had difficulty manipulating the two locks – and wondered how a six-year-old girl could manage this by herself.

Believing that it was unlikely Kiesha had prised open the door herself, Oxford and Marks turned to the theory that a stranger had abducted her from her bed. But there were no signs anywhere of a break-in. Nor were there any other obvious signs of an intruder. If she'd been alive or conscious when taken out of the apartment, the

Four days after Kiesha's disappearance, concerned neighbours held a candlelight vigil outside the missing six-year-old's unit block

detectives tried to imagine how an abductor could possibly hold the child in his or her arms while at the same time muffling the young girl's screams and then use two hands to manipulate the two locks on the door. It didn't add up.

Without further evidence, however, the police had no option but to go along with the couple's account while continuing their own investigation. As the hours passed police interviewed and re-interviewed the couple, looking for further clues as to what had happened to Kiesha or for discrepancies in their story.

There were three clear options: an intruder broke in and abducted the young child, Kiesha wandered off herself or, lastly, something happened to this little girl within the apartment.

As the detectives interviewed her, Abrahams's character soon became all too obvious. Physically she appeared to be a hard woman, stony faced; even in family photos she rarely appeared to smile. And as they went over the events of the weekend, Oxford found her manner aggressive and self-centred. She took the detectives' probing as a direct attack on her parenting skills. And when confronted about blood that scientific officers had detected in the unit, Abrahams reacted angrily: "I don't know. What are you trying to say?"

After two days, the policemen played a crucial investigative card: they asked the couple to front a media conference. Oxford told the pair that appealing

to the public would help the hunt progress. Abrahams was reluctant but Oxford persisted. He knew that an appeal from the couple could bring new information to light, and also give investigators a chance to gauge the pair's credibility.

So, two days after they'd reported the little girl missing, Kiesha's mother and her stepfather faced the cameras. Oxford stood nearby, trying to read the couples' body language, and intent on hearing every word they uttered.

"If there's anyone out there that knows, or seen anything, just come forward, contact the police – it would really help," Smith said, surrounded by the media. Seemingly too emotional to speak, Abrahams sobbed. Sunglasses

Kristi Abrahams, wearing dark glasses and holding a tissue in front of her face, and partner Robert Smith made an emotional appeal in front of the media



PHOTO: FAIRFAX PHOTOS

covered her eyes and a tissue covered her face.

"Someone must know something," Smith continued. "Please come forward. She's beautiful you know, funny, always happy. Can't describe how it's been, you don't know until

was sufficient evidence to prosecute Abrahams and Smith for Kiesha's murder. But they needed to recover the little girl's body to ensure the pair couldn't offer up any other explanation about Kiesha's disappearance strong enough to convince a jury.

KIESHA HAD HARDLY EVER ATTENDED SCHOOL. IN FACT, SHE HAD ONLY BEEN FOR FOUR DAYS THAT YEAR

you put yourself in my shoes. Just hope that she's found as soon as possible. It's what we need, safe and well. She was always happy, bubbly, you know, loved playing just like any kid would."

She *was* always happy? Oxford was stunned. *Who speaks about their missing child in the past tense*, he wondered, *unless they know for certain that she's never coming back?*

A reporter asked: "Do you have any idea that anyone you might know, who may have her? The family must have thought long and hard about this – does anyone have any idea?"

"We have no idea," Smith replied, "If I had any idea, mate, we'd be there looking."

From this point on Oxford and Marks were all but certain this was a crocodile tears interview – and that Kristi Abrahams and Robert Smith had become murder inquiry suspects – Number 1 and Number 2.

The two detectives believed there

Meanwhile, media and public interest in every aspect of the case was growing in intensity, and the police officers knew everything they did – or didn't do – was under the microscope. The community demanded answers, but for now those answers weren't forthcoming. Oxford and Marks resolved to remain tight. They knew all it would take was a little luck to turn things their way.

Detectives set about checking the pair's movements in late July. They garnered details of credit card transactions and phone records and gradually pieced together where they had been and what they had been doing.

Trying to trace Kiesha's movements – or that of any young child – is difficult, given they don't have credit cards, bank accounts or phones to monitor. However, a startling picture emerged when they checked with local school records: Kiesha hardly ever attended – in fact she had only been to school

on four days that year. She had also not been seen by a single independent witness for three weeks prior to her mother calling emergency services. But neither Abrahams nor Smith drove and so the detectives were perplexed: if the couple had killed her sometime since she had last been seen in their home, then how did they get her body out of the apartment to dispose of it?

One chillingly grim possibility arose: perhaps this little girl had simply been thrown away with the rubbish.

That led a team of task force detectives to visit the local tip at Marsden Park to determine if a search was feasible. Given that Kiesha could have

Smith decided to move into a motel away from the apartment. They had unwittingly given police a breakthrough opportunity.

With the unit empty, officers from the Forensic Division systematically searched it for clues and seized several items – including the girl’s mattress, bedding and carpet for further testing. Meanwhile, other police installed a listening device so that the couple’s conversations could be monitored when they returned.

Laboratory reports showed traces of Kiesha’s blood throughout the unit as well as teeth marks in the wooden frame of her bed. Further chilling evidence came two days later, when

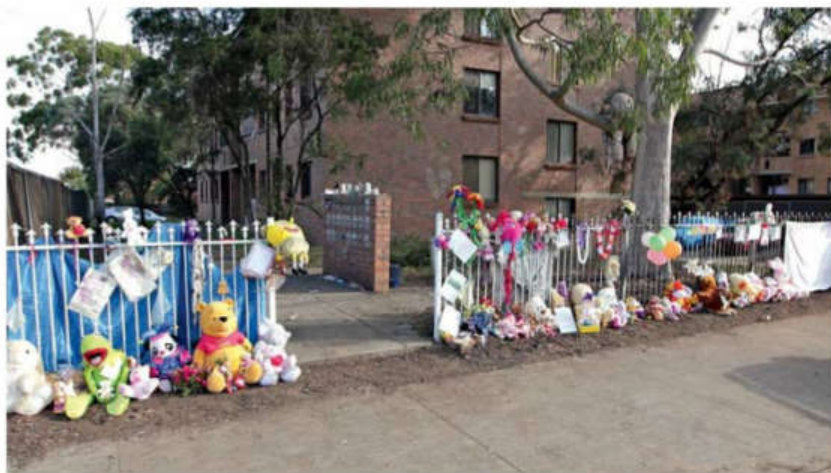
FOR THE POLICE TEAM, IT WAS HARROWING AND EMOTIONAL WORK, BUT STILL THEY DID NOT HAVE THE BREAKTHROUGH

been dumped anytime in the three weeks before the emergency call, they quickly realised they were facing a mammoth task. Rubbish came in from a wide catchment area and was continually compacted. Even if police worked three or four teams in ten-hour shifts, it could take them months and months to search the garbage – and there was no guarantee of success. There were stronger leads to follow.

In the weeks after Kiesha’s disappearance, and blaming the media scrutiny that followed, Abrahams and

the couple walked back in. It took only minutes before police heard Abrahams’s first few words: “They’ve taken her mattress; they’ll only find her piss and shit on it”. It was a cold, emotionless statement – supposedly from a distraught mother.

From the apartment, the couple shifted to a government-subsidised house. The police had lawfully bugged this as well. And so for the next eight months, a covert police listening post heard every word uttered by the suspects. For the police team, it was



Toys and flowers placed outside the two-bedroom unit at Woodstock Ave in Mount Drutt. The police found traces of Kiesha's blood in several rooms

harrowing and emotional work, but still they did not have the breakthrough that would guarantee a murder conviction.

In December 2010 – four months after Kiesha was reported missing – Oxford and Marks hatched a new plan to try to break the case. Undercover operatives would try to gain the couple's confidence, hoping that as they won over their trust, the pair's guard would drop and they'd eventually say or do something that would give police what they needed.

Day after day, week after week, the operatives wormed their way into the couple's lives, targeting who they believed to be the weaker link – Smith. Chance meetings, random conversations and slowly Smith looked upon these newfound "friends" as

trustworthy. They convinced him they could help him build a better life, and pandered to his ego, encouraging him to think he could become an important person.

It all came to a head on the night of April 21, 2011, when Abrahams and Smith met with the undercover agents at a hotel in the centre of Sydney. Unbeknownst to them, every word was being monitored and recorded.

Eventually the operatives asked if there was anything in the couple's past that they needed to tell their new friends about. It was crucial, they explained, that the pair was honest, otherwise the promise of a new future could not be achieved.

Breathlessly, Oxford and Marks, watching and listening in the next



Detective Sergeant Andrew Marks (left) and Detective Inspector Russell Oxford explain how it took a nine-month investigation to discover the awful truth

room, waited for what they hoped would be the final move in this game of chess. And just as they hoped, Abrahams opened up, revealing how her little girl had died.

She explained that about two weeks before Kiesha was reported missing she'd been in the child's bedroom where Kiesha was crying. She wanted her daughter to put on her pyjamas, she said, and gave her "a little nudge" with her foot. Kiesha jumped and hit her head on the bottom of the bed, she said, and then Kiesha went "funny".

Abrahams placed Kiesha in the shower in an effort to wake her up, she explained, but Kiesha felt like "jelly". Abrahams and Smith put the little girl on a foldout bed and went to sleep.

When they awoke they found Kiesha was no longer breathing.

The undercover operatives listened as she explained how she and Smith got a suitcase from their garage, placed Kiesha's body inside and put it in a wardrobe in the child's bedroom. It would stay there for several days.

Smith rode his bicycle around the area to find a burial site in bushland. Then, at about 5am on Sunday, July 18, they called a taxi – using a false name and address – and directed the driver to the remote site chosen by Smith.

Using a hammer, Smith dug a shallow hole, tipped Kiesha's body out of the suitcase, poured petrol over her and set her alight.

The investigators had enough to

arrest them but they wanted the couple to lead them to where Kiesha's remains could be found, putting their guilt beyond doubt. As parents, both Oxford and Marks felt a responsibility to find this little girl and bring her back from where she had been so callously left.

By now Abrahams and Smith had confided all to their trusted "friends". And with nothing left to hide, and possibly eager to prove the almost unbelievable story they had just recounted was indeed true, the couple agreed to take the operatives to the burial site that night.

Oxford and Marks followed at a safe distance.

At 1.12am on April 22, after leading the undercover agents to the shallow grave, Abrahams and Smith emerged

from the hauntingly lonely piece of scrub in Freya Crescent at Shalvey, to be met by Oxford and Marks. The hunt was over. They were under arrest.

The couple was taken to Mount Druitt Police Station and formally charged with Kiesha's murder. It would have been her seventh birthday.

Forensic investigators found skeletal remains, teeth and fragments of hair in the dirt. Chipped teeth fractures were found to have occurred at or near the time of death. There was also evidence of bone injuries dating from her final weeks and months.

Supreme Court Justice Ian Harrison declared as he locked away Kristi Abrahams for up to 22 years, "In a civilised community it is distressing even to consider that a mother could rationally formulate any possible reason for killing her child."

In jailing Robert Smith for at least 12 years, Justice Megan Latham was scathing of his "cowardly choice" to protect his own interests. "This helpless and vulnerable child depended for survival as much on the person who stood by and did nothing, as upon the person who assaulted her," she said.

For Andrew Marks and Russell Oxford, arresting Abrahams and Smith is a day they will never forget. "This investigation touched at the heart-strings because we are all parents," Oxford says, now knowing that justice has been done. "It was simply the case that we never wanted to give up on." **R**

Puzzles

See page 122

THE PILE-UP EFFECT

B. Each object in the set is made up of three composite shapes; A and C have only two.

ODD ONE OUT

In each group of three symbols, there's at least one symbol that's empty inside.

SYMBOLISM

A. The symbols on the top line occur in reverse sequence on the bottom line; the symbols on the second line from the top occur in reverse sequence on the second line from the bottom; the symbols on the third line from the top occur in reverse sequence on the third line from the bottom; and the symbols on the fourth line from the top occur in reverse sequence on the fourth line from the bottom.

DOMINOES

C. The bottom number minus the top number always equals one.

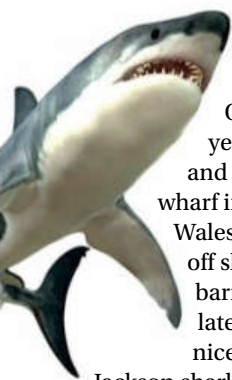
Hidden Meaning

A. Repairs
B. An 'A' in history
C. Oh my aching back



Smart Animals

These clever creatures are quick to adapt to whatever situation they find themselves in



Don't Try That Line on Me

RHYS DAVIES

One wintery night last year, my friend Patrick and I were fishing at the wharf in Tathra, New South Wales. The evening started off slowly with only two barracudas caught but later on we pulled in a nice metre-long Port

Jackson shark. From here, the pace picked up with bite after bite of flathead, snapper, ray and bream.

Around 3am we decided to call it a night. We tipped our remaining bait over the edge of the wharf but left a tiny estuary rod sitting there with the bait still attached. The next thing we knew, the rod began flying off! We both grabbed it, then I took over. I could feel some strong headshakes from the fish at the other end. While I held on, Patrick shone a torch down towards the line. To our surprise, it was a 2.5m long shark. With no hope of pulling the shark up onto the wharf it looked as though we had no choice but to cut the line. But before we had time to do this, the shark suddenly dived deep down below the wharf. It

then leapt out, thumped its head on a pylon and snapped the line itself. The shark then cruised away. It's always the biggest one that gets away.

I Say, Old Chap, Care for a Game of Cricket?

LEO THORNTON

A few summers ago, I took Jack, my nine-year-old Australian terrier, for a walk to our local oval. There was a group of boys playing cricket and I decided to watch the game. The batsman hit the ball some 40m towards us and I went to pick it up, but Jack beat me to it. This surprised me because he had always regarded "go fetch" and other ball games as a complete waste of energy unless it involved a treat. But not this time.

He grabbed the ball and, instead of running away with it, he took off towards the cricketers and dropped it at the bowler's feet. The boys were as surprised as I was. The bowler picked up the ball, wiped it on his shorts and continued the game. Jack then raced back to where I was standing to resume his interested observation.





A Greedy Goanna Defeated

TRUDY ELZE

One morning, while I was working in the garden of our bush property in South East Queensland, an 1.8m-long goanna (monitor lizard) casually climbed down from one of our large gum trees. It steadied its head-first descent using massive claws to dig into the bark of the tree.

The goanna then sauntered across our garden, stopping to peer into the treetops. Liking what it heard up in one large gum, it began to slowly climb up it. For some reason halfway up, it changed its mind, and returned back to ground level. The goanna then sat motionless with its predatory gaze firmly fixed on the egg-laden nest in the upper branches of the tree.

Three kookaburras flew down, landing on one of the lower branches

of the tree and gave a shrill siren of warning. Two noisy miner birds appeared and began swooping down at the goanna's head before being joined by three others. While the kookaburras kept up a cacophony of screeching, the five noisy miners continued to attack the goanna.

When a bird eventually made contact, the goanna took a swipe with its sharp, long talons. Realising it was no match for the angry defenders, the goanna ducked, then made a hasty retreat to the safety of the bushy undergrowth next door.

With the carnivorous reptile gone, peace descended once more on my little patch of bushland.

You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 6 for details on how to contribute.



FAST FACTS ABOUT GOANNAS

■ Australian monitor lizards, of which there are 25 species, were given the name *goanna* by the early European settlers – perhaps from South American *iguanas*. Goannas are closely related to Indonesia's komodo dragons.

■ They reach an average length of 1.4m and can weigh as much as 6kg.

■ Loose skin on a goanna's neck makes their neck seem larger than their head. If they feel threatened they can puff up the flaps so they appear larger.

■ Their diet includes snakes, insects, birds, small mammals and carrion.

■ Although goannas walk on all four legs, they sprint on their hind legs.

BOOK DIGEST



*Elke Vogelsang
shares some up
close and personal
shots of her dogs'
snouts*

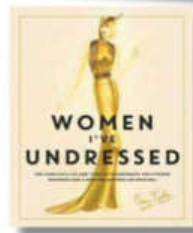


In **NICE NOSING YOU** (Hardie Grant), **Elke Vogelsang** celebrates the Spanish rescue dogs that changed her and her husband's lives one day in 2009:

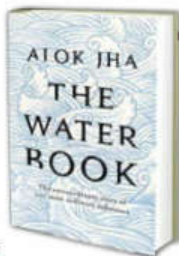
"... My obsession with photography started when my husband, Carsten, fell seriously ill. On Christmas Day, 2009, the dogs (in those days it was only Noodles and Scout) suddenly started barking, whining and howling. I was busy and tried to ignore them. Then they started to get agitated. That's when I realised something must be seriously wrong. When I let them out of the room to see what had alarmed them, they ran to the bathroom door. We found Carsten unconscious in the bathtub. If we had found him only minutes later he would have drowned. Contrary to the expectations of many, he survived and recovered fully from a brain haemorrhage. During those weeks of uncertainty, while Carsten was in a coma and in hospital, I began a photographic diary for him, taking at least one picture a day."

Orry-Kelly collected three Oscars for costume design during the golden age of movies. His recently discovered memoir, **WOMEN I'VE UNDRESSED** (Random House), doesn't mince words: "... Hollywood dislikes naked truths. Truth is rarely served at their dinner parties. When it is, it's so sugar-coated it belongs with the dessert that lacks the squeeze of lemon – that slight tart taste my mother said belonged to any well-prepared sweet. Seldom does Hollywood dish out a wholesome straightforward truth along with the bloody rare roast beef.

[My] book deals with famous people I have known and dressed. And some I've undressed, draping them in the sheerest chiffon, a fabric the French call *ninon*. It's when these beauties face the three-way mirror in my fitting room, "ninon over none-on" unmasked, that they let their hair down."



*Marilyn Monroe, in a promotional portrait for **Some Like It Hot**, wears a black silk dress designed by Orry-Kelly*



Alok Jha writes in **THE WATER BOOK** (Hachette):

"... It's raining outside. If not where you are, then somewhere on the Earth at this very moment, water is falling from the sky. It might be droplets or snowflakes, sleet or hail. Water is always moving – under your feet in unseen aquifers and in the pipes laid down by engineers to move food and waste around

our cities. It moves next to you in trees and plants, sucked from the ground to feed their leaves. It works inside you, a thick treacle that looks unlike any other water you have ever encountered. It moves around in your blood, keeps your proteins and DNA working and in their correct shapes, and transports nutrients and signals in and out of cells."

Stephen J. Dubner writing in **WHEN TO ROB A BANK: THE FREAKOPEDIA** (Allen Lane):

"... A blogger named Ganesh Kulkarni discovered that the commuter trains of Mumbai serve six million passengers daily but the system isn't equipped to check everyone's ticket. Instead, Kulkarni writes, ticket agents conduct random ticket checks. This has given rise to a form of cheating that is elegantly called "ticketless travel". Although it's probably not very common to get busted for traveling ticketlessly, there is a significant fine if you are. And so, Kulkarni writes, one clever traveller has devised an insurance policy to make sure that ticketless travellers who are caught can lay off some of the expense.

Here's how it works. You pay 500 rupees to join an organisation of fellow ticketless travellers. If you do get caught travelling without a ticket, you pay the fine and turn in your receipt to the ticketless-traveller organisation, which refunds you 100 per cent of the fine.

Don't you wish that everyone in society was as creative as the cheaters?"



"... There's a quiet revolution rolling through our cities. Urban armies are being mobilised, in parks, along footpaths, in schools – even on rooftops. The troops in these battalions are difficult to detect. They dress like civilians. Instead of camouflage fatigues, you'll see gumboots. Instead of wearing helmets, they wear sunhats. Instead of carrying rifles, they carry rakes. Instead of tanks, there are wheelbarrows. And to mark their conquests they're not raising flags, they're raising garden beds."



TV broadcaster and city gardener **Indira Naidoo** in **THE EDIBLE CITY** (Lantern)



MOVIE DIGEST

Kate Winslet returns home in style

THE DRESSMAKER *Drama*

Rosalie Ham's much-loved novel has been beautifully adapted for the screen by Jocelyn Moorhouse (*Proof*, *How to Make an American Quilt*). Starring Kate Winslet as Tilly and set in the 1950s, it is a bittersweet drama about a young woman who after many years in Europe returns to her small, remote Australian hometown. Armed with her Singer sewing machine and haute couture style, the very glamorous Tilly transforms the women of the town in such a way that she gets sweet revenge on those who did her wrong in the past. Liam Hemsworth plays her younger love interest, with Judy Davis and Hugo Weaving also in the cast.



ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING *Sci-fi Comedy*

Monty Python fans will enjoy this film directed by Terry Jones. To determine whether or not the Earth should be destroyed, a group of eccentric aliens (voiced by John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle and Michael Palin) bestow unsuspecting schoolteacher Neil Clarke (Simon Pegg) with the ability to make all his wishes a reality. From space, the aliens watch Neil struggle as he learns to deal with his new powers and the hilarious events that consequently arise. Thankfully Dennis, Neil's faithful dog (voiced by the late Robin Williams), is by his side as is his love interest played by Kate Beckinsale. Will Neil prove to be a worthy recipient of these powers and save the Earth from destruction?



Robin Williams voices Simon Pegg's canine sidekick



*A shamble
in the woods:
Robert Redford
and Nick Nolte*

A WALK IN THE WOODS *Comedy Adventure*

Robert Redford plays Bill Bryson in this film version of the travel writer's 1998 book of the same name. After living in the UK for 20 years, Bryson returns to the US and challenges himself to hike the 3500km Appalachian Trail. Convincing old friend Stephen Katz to join him, the pair set off on a spectacular trek from Georgia to Maine. Contending with bears, snow, poor maps, lack of experience and each other, they soon realise that "the Appalachian Trail is like life, you never know what's going to happen next ...". Think *Grumpy Old Men* meets Bear Grylls.



THE WALK *Adventure, Comedy*

This is the story of French Aerial artist Philippe Petit (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) who – unlike those of us who fear heights – has always looked for the perfect place to stretch his high wire. In 1974 this led him to the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. Guided by his mentor Papa Rudy (Ben Kingsley) and a band of helpers, Petit finds executing his illegal plan tricky. Robert Zemeckis (*Forrest Gump*) brilliantly directs this character-driven story. Thanks to photorealistic techniques and IMAX 3D wizardry, you will experience the feeling of walking in the clouds.

Q: Which was the first movie to ever be given the title "Blockbuster"?
Hint: it turns 40 this year.

THE WOMAN IN GOLD

Drama

Based on a true story, Helen Mirren delivers another exceptional performance as an elderly Jewish woman, Maria Altmann. Sixty years after fleeing Vienna to live in Canada, Altmann seeks to reclaim family possessions seized by the Nazis during World War II. Among them is Gustav Klimt's famous gold leaf painting of her Aunt Adele, *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*. Unfortunately for Altmann, the Austrian government fights tooth and nail to keep the painting. So begins a journey that, along with her inexperienced lawyer (Ryan Reynolds), takes her to the centre of the Austrian establishment and the US Supreme Court.



Spotlight on ... Robert Redford

- Turns 80 next year on August 18, 2016.
- Birth name is Charles Robert Redford, Jr.
- Lost his college baseball scholarship at the University of Colorado because of drunkenness.
- Missed out on the role of Ben Braddock in *The Graduate* (1967) because director Mike Nichols didn't think anyone would believe Redford would have trouble getting "the girl". The role went to Dustin Hoffman.
- Although best known as an actor, has also won an Academy Award for Best Director (*Ordinary People*, 1980).
- Often did his own stunts in action sequences but made sure the stunt men hired for it were paid, so as not to put anyone out of work.
- Dislikes watching his own films, apart from *The Sting* (1973), for which he won an Academy Award for Best Actor.
- Over the years, his height has raised much speculation, with estimates ranging from 1.70m to 1.87m. Our best guess? 1.79m.

A: Jaws

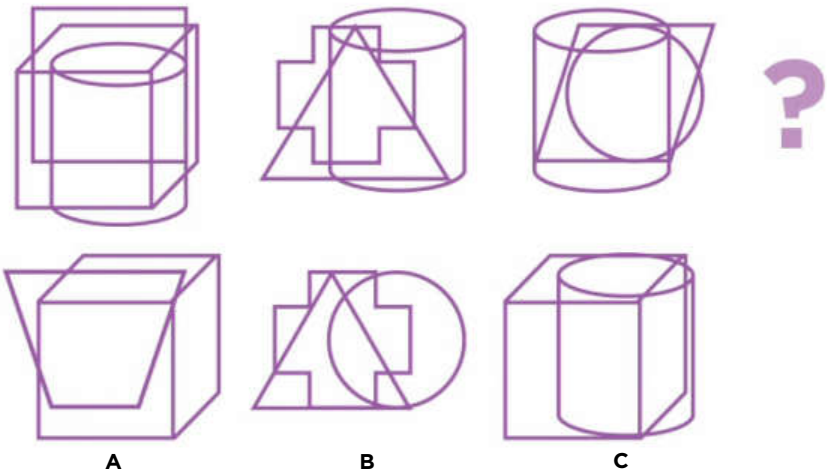


Puzzles

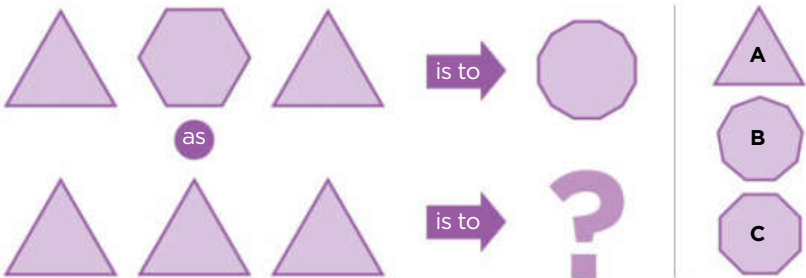
Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 113

The Pile-up Effect

Which of A, B or C belongs with the set on the top row?

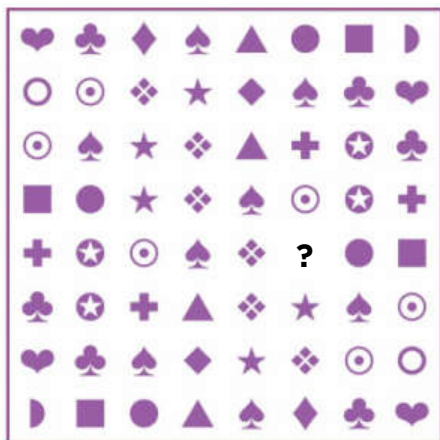


Shapes



Symbolism

Is symbol A, B, C or D missing from the grid below?



A



B



C

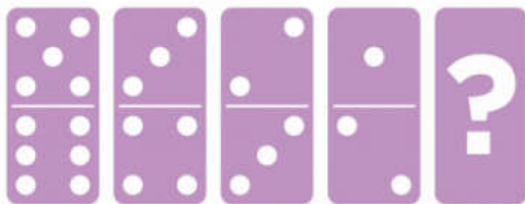


D



Dominoes

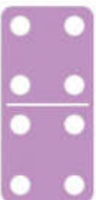
Which of A, B, C or D matches the set?



A



B

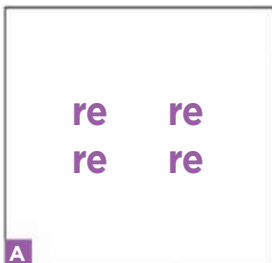


C

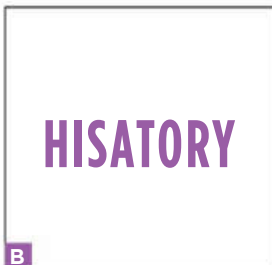


Hidden Meaning

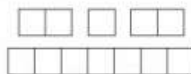
Identify the common words or phrases below.



A



B



C



Trivia

1. What does pride proverbially come before? **1 point**

2. Is Argentina's total land area larger or smaller than India's? **1 point**

3. In a lunar eclipse, what's blocking the sun's light from the moon? **1 point**

4. Which UK newspaper is credited with the first printed use of the term "Beatlemania"? It occurred this month in which year? **2 points**

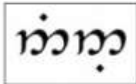
5. If you threw a Heinz, a Mad House, a Basement, or Garden States, what sport would you be playing? **1 point**

6. After his death at Trafalgar this month in 1805, Lord Nelson's body was transported back to London in a barrel filled with what? **1 point**

7. Which number - 7, 8, 9 or 10 - goes with each of the following?

a) Beethoven symphonies. b) books in the *Harry Potter* series. c) legs on a lobster. d) pints in a gallon. **3 points**

8. Nine actors, including Ian McKellan, Orlando Bloom and Elijah Wood, all have this tattoo. What is it and why? **2 points**



9. Name the three backing bands from the descriptors:

- Gladys Knight and the fruit seeds.
- Iggy Pop and Larry, Curly and Moe.
- Bill Haley and the fast-moving celestial ice (above). **3 points**

10. Which 16th century explorer and privateer captained the *Golden Hind*? **1 point**

11. Men and women are differentiated by the chromosome pairs XX and XY. Which has which? **1 point**

12. Which American hospitality chain is named after the chief mate in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*? **1 point**

13. Which two mainlands border the Aegean Sea? **1 point**

14. What is the vegetable haricot vert more commonly known as? **1 point**

16-20 Gold medal

11-15 Silver medal

6-10 Bronze medal

0-5 Wooden spoon

1. A fall. 2. Smaller. 3. Earth. 4. The *Daily Mirror*, 1960-65 (October 15, 1963). 5. Darts. 6. Brandy. 7. a) 9; b) 7; c) 10; d) 8. 8. It's Elvish for "nine". The actors who played the fellowship in Peter Jackson's *The Fellowship of the Ring* got it - though John Rhys-Davies sent his stunt double in his place. 9. The Pips; The Stooges; The Cornets. 10. Sir Francis Drake. 11. Women XX; men XY. 12. Starbuck's. 13. Greece and Turkey. 14. French, green or string beans.

IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

Madcap Adventures

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. Carroll (aka Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) invented words like boojum and jabberwocky, and his works abound with more terms worth knowing. In celebration, here's a sampling. Answers on the next page.

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

1. hookah *n.* – A: staff of a shepherdess. B: chess queen's crown. C: smoking pipe.

2. platitudes *n.* – A: trite sayings. B: temperate climates. C: heaped servings.

3. welter *v.* – A: toss or roll (as in waves). B: droop in the sun. C: shrink in size.

4. tremulous *adj.* – A: forceful and clear. B: having a smooth, shiny surface. C: shaking or quivering slightly.

5. impertinent *adj.* – A: late for a meeting. B: talking rapidly. C: rude.

6. languid *adj.* – A: speaking fluently. B: sluggish or weak. C: slightly tilted.

7. ungainly *adj.* – A: not attractive. B: clumsy or awkward. C: sickly thin.

8. antipathies *n.* – A: miracle cures.

B: sudden storms, usually in the tropics. C: feelings of dislike.

9. livery *n.* – A: model boat. B: long, boring speech. C: uniform.

10. will-o'-the-wisp *n.* – A: fast speaker. B: rare plant. C: misleading goal or hope.

11. sally *n.* – A: female rabbit. B: white smock or robe. C: witty remark.

12. griffin *n.* – A: monster with wings. B: horn. C: cranky man.

13. cravat *n.* – A: game similar to croquet. B: scarf-like necktie. C: two-person rowboat.

14. hansom *n.* – A: horse-drawn carriage. B: knight or nobility. C: chimney flue.

15. sagaciously *adv.* – A: wisely. B: dimly or foolishly. C: ambitiously.

Answers

1. hookah – [C] smoking pipe. Gerry found a shop downtown that offered supplies for his antique hookah.

2. platitudes – [A] trite sayings. Our rugby coach offered a dozen platitudes like “No pain, no gain.”

3. welter – [A] toss or roll (as in waves). Heading for shore, Lee stayed focused on the buoy weltering in the distance.

4. tremulous – [C] shaking or quivering slightly. Her voice was weak and tremulous, but the audience clapped politely when she finished the song.

5. impertinent – [C] rude. “Would it be too impertinent to point out that I can hear you snoring six rows back?”

6. languid – [B] sluggish or weak. By three in the afternoon, I am too languid to think about anything but coffee and a couch.

7. ungainly – [B] clumsy or awkward. Is it me, or is he the most ungainly mime you’ve ever seen?

8. antipathies – [C] feelings of dislike. I’d say there were some mild antipathies between the two speakers at the community meeting.

9. livery – [C] uniform. The butler’s rumpled livery made him a prime suspect in the disappearance of our dinner host.

10. will-o’-the-wisp – [C] misleading goal or hope. Though her friends think she’s chasing a will-o’-the-wisp, Alexis is determined to follow her dream of becoming a pop star.

11. sally – [C] witty remark. Aside from the occasional sally, the sportscasters had little to offer.

12. griffin – [A] monster with wings. Felix was fascinated by the illustrations of the griffin in his mythology book.

13. cravat – [B] scarf-like necktie. I’m going to the party as James Bond – would he wear a cravat?

14. hansom – [A] horse-drawn carriage. The producer of *Cinderella* was troubled by the plan to transform the hansom into a pumpkin onstage.

15. sagaciously – [A] wisely. The critic sagaciously pointed out the holes in the logic of Tara’s dense first novel.

A PUZZLE FROM WONDERLAND

Here is one of Lewis Carroll’s small riddles in rhyme. Can you solve it?

*Dreaming of apples on a wall,
And dreaming often, dear,
I dreamed that, if I counted all,
How many would appear?*

Answer: Ten would appear, as he is dreaming. [“of ten,” dear.]

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